Volume #117

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE REPORTS

POVERTY PROFILE 1999

SUMMER 2002

Canada

ERRATA, WELFARE INCOMES, 2000 AND 2001

Page 12, third paragraph: "In a first group....", delete "British Columbia".

Page 26, Table 2 for 2001, under "Nova Scotia", "Person with a Disability", Footnote 8 should be deleted.

The Government of Manitoba has provided the National Council of Welfare with new information to correct that which was previously provided.

Pages 17 and 27

TABLE 2, ESTIMATED 2000 AND 2001 ANNUAL WELFARE INCOME BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

	Basic Social Assistance	Additional Benefits	Federal Child Tax Benefit	Provincial Child Benefit	GST Credit	Provincial Tax Credits	Total Income
MANITOBA - 2000							
Person with a Disability	$7,157	960			233		8,350
Single Parent, One Child	8,971		2,159		486		11,616
Couple, Two Children	12,687	160	3,683		616		17,146
MANITOBA - 2001							
Person with a Disability	7,157	960			235		8,352
Single Parent, One Child	9,363		2,447		520		12,330
Couple, Two Children	12,687	160	4,250		628		17,725

Pages 22, 31 and 32

Footnote # 28 of Table 2, 2000 and 2001
Effective July 2000 to June 2001, families with children age six and under received an extra $20 per month per child to compensate for the recovery of the NCBS. Starting in July 2001, families with children six and under did not have NCBS deducted for those children. This increase replaced the $20 per month increase for children six and under which was effective to June 2001.

Addition to Footnote # 29 of Table 2, 2000 and 2001
The school supplies allowance was increased in 2000 by $20 per child to $60 for children in kindergarten to grade six, $80 for students in grades seven and eight, and $100 for students in grades nine through twelve. This is provided once annually.

Pages 40 and 42

TABLE 3, ADEQUACY OF BENEFITS				
MANITOBA	**2000**		**2001**	
	Total Income	Total Welfare Income as % of Poverty Line	Total Income	Total Welfare Income as % of Poverty Line
Person with a Disability	$8,349	45%	$8,352	44%
Single Parent, One Child	$11,616	51%	$12,330	52%
Couple, Two Children	$17,146	50%	$17,725	50%

Pages 46 and 48

TABLE 4, WELFARE INCOMES AS PERCENTAGE OF AVERAGE INCOMES				
MANITOBA	**2000**		**2001**	
	Total Income	Welfare Income as % of Estimated Average Income	Total Income	Welfare Income as % of Estimated Average Income
Person with a Disability	$8,349	33%	$8,352	32%
Single Parent, One Child	$11,616	45%	$12,330	46%
Couple, Two Children	$17,146	27%	$17,725	27%

Pages 54 and 58

102-06244/

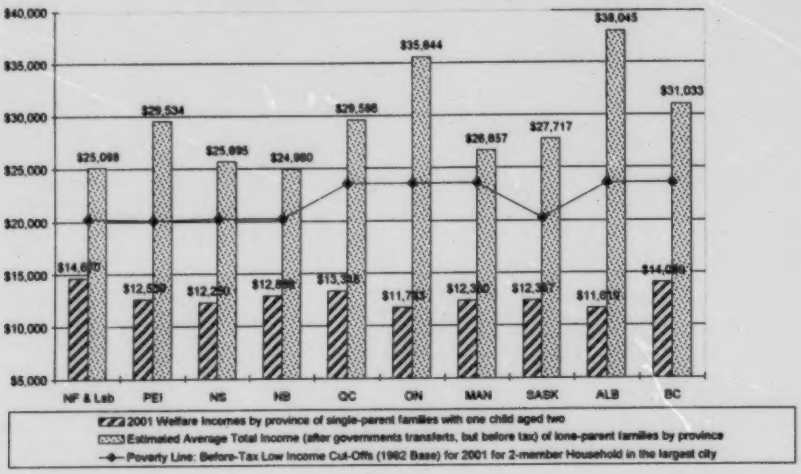
TABLE 5, 2001 PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL WELFARE BENEFITS IN CONSTANT DOLLARS									
MANITOBA									
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% CHANGE 1986-2001	% CHANGE 1991-2001	% CHANGE 1999-2000	% CHANGE 2000-2001
Person with a Disability	$8,661	$8,581	$8,502	$8,328	$8,117		-2.4%	-2.1%	-2.5%
Single Parent, One Child	$10,436	$10,015	$9,424	$9,204	$9,363	-20.2%	-16.2%	-2.3%	1.7%
Couple, Two Children	$15,543	$14,670	$13,688	$13,181	$12,847	-27.7%	-36.0%	-3.7%	-2.5%

Page 182

TABLE 6, WELFARE INCOME AS PERCENTAGE OF THE POVERTY LINE									
MANITOBA									
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	% CHANGE 1986-2001	% CHANGE 1991-2001	% CHANGE 1999-2000	% CHANGE 2000-2001
Person with a Disability	50%	50%	49%	45%	44%		- 10.6 %	-8.4 %	-2.6 %
Single Parent, One Child	51%	51%	50%	51%	52%	-6.2 %	-5.1 %	1.5 %	3.3 %
Couple, Two Children	52%	51%	50%	50%	50%	-19.5 %	-34.1 %	-1.3 %	0.8 %

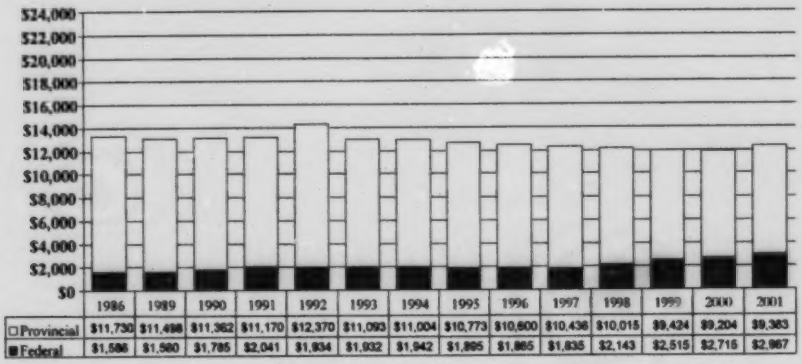
Page 44 – FIGURE 1

2001 Welfare Incomes for Single Parent with One Child Aged Two Compared to Poverty Line and Estimated Average Income



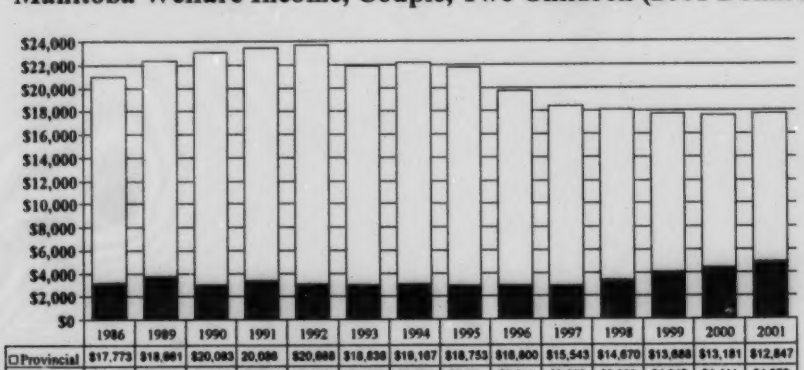
Page 72 – FIGURE 2

Manitoba Welfare Income, Single Parent, One Child (2001 Dollars)



	1986	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Provincial	$11,730	$11,498	$11,362	$11,170	$12,370	$11,093	$11,004	$10,773	$10,600	$10,436	$10,015	$9,424	$9,204	$9,383
Federal	$1,586	$1,580	$1,785	$2,041	$1,934	$1,932	$1,942	$1,895	$1,885	$1,835	$2,143	$2,515	$2,715	$2,987

Manitoba Welfare Income, Couple, Two Children (2001 Dollars)



	1986	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Provincial	$17,773	$18,661	$20,083	20,086	$20,888	$18,638	$19,167	$18,753	$18,800	$15,543	$14,670	$13,888	$13,181	$12,847
Federal	$3,172	$3,715	$2,981	3,351	$3,045	$3,019	$3,024	$2,981	$2,913	$2,888	$3,383	$4,045	$4,411	$4,878

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1999

SUMMER 2002

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INTRODUCTION

The National Council of Welfare was pleased to see that many of the poverty rates in Canada, which decreased slightly in 1998, have continued in that direction in 1999. But there is scant cause for hope that our wealthy country is doing what it takes to seriously address the causes and consequences of poverty. Some groups of Canadians still face very high poverty rates as well as severe depth and long duration of poverty.

During the same period from 1998 to 1999, Canada's Gross Domestic Product grew from $919.8 billion to $966.4 billion—an increase of nearly 5 percent. If this real rate of economic growth were to be used as a yardstick, most Canadian poverty rates actually stagnated in 1999 as they had throughout the 1990s.

The legacy of past and current gender discrimination continues as senior women's poverty rates worsened between 1998 and 1999. And how can our country's expectations for the future be bright when children under six are the most likely to have experienced poverty in all six years between 1993 and 1998—in effect, their whole lives, during the most critical period of human development? Additional key patterns and trends are provided in the next section.

Poverty Profile 1999 is the latest annual report by the National Council of Welfare based on factual material compiled by Statistics Canada. It includes numerous statistics for 1999 and poverty trends dating back to 1980. As in the past, the report is an analysis of the facts rather than a blueprint for eliminating poverty and it contains no specific recommendations as such. The National Council of Welfare has published many other reports over the years that are full of proposals for combating poverty.

Since the publication of *Poverty Profile 1998*, our data have gone through two separate but overlapping revisions that have somewhat affected the numbers compared to earlier editions of *Poverty Profile* but the patterns and trends remain consistent. The first set of revisions required the re-weighting of data from several years. Statistics Canada revised its low-income data for the period 1980 through 1993 in the 1994 version of *Income Distributions by Size in Canada*. These revisions included shifting population estimates to the 1991 census base, adjusting the estimates to correct under-coverage, and including non-permanent residents physically present in Canada. The National Council of Welfare has decided to use Statistics Canada's re-weighted counts for 1980 to 1993.

The second set of revisions aimed to harmonise standards and definitions between the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) and the Survey of Income and Labour Dynamics (SLID). SCF, from which we derived our data from 1980 through 1995, excluded military personnel and people who did not have an income. In addition, in SCF a child is defined as "a person under 18 years of age, excluding persons 15 to 17 years old who reported marital status as other than single". In essence, this definition excludes any person under 18 years of age that is married, separated, divorced or widowed. In contrast, our data for 1996 to 1999 use the SLID definition of a child as "all persons under 18 years of age, regardless of marital status". We have obtained data from Statistics Canada using the definition of a child for 1980 to 1995 that is consistent with the SLID definition.

There are also new features in *Poverty Profile 1999*. In previous years, most of the data presented covered poverty for one year only. They could not tell us how many of the people who were poor in one year were also poor in the subsequent years or how long they were likely to remain poor. However, this edition of *Poverty Profile* uses data from the recently completed Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics to investigate the dynamics of poverty. It provides an analysis of how people's incomes changed over time between 1993 and 1998.

Also, in previous years, we analyzed the incidence and depth of poverty in Canada using primarily pre-tax low-income lines. Where possible in this report, particularly in our analysis of long-term poverty in Canada, we have provided both pre-tax and post-tax poverty measures. One advantage of this approach is that it enables us to see the impact of the income tax system on income distribution in Canada. It also accounts for the fact that some sources of income are not taxable. Some taxes such as sales taxes, however, are not included and they can have a regressive effect that is not offset by GST and other credits. Both pre- and post-tax measures are important tools for understanding poverty. For more details on methodology and definitions, please refer to the Appendices.

In addition to the income disparities covered in this report, recently released results of Statistic Canada's Survey of Financial Security indicate that wealth disparities are also a major and growing problem. Many low-income Canadians have few or no assets and high debt, a recipe for ongoing exclusion and hopelessness. In our report this year, we have included some information on assets from the SLID database.

A special feature for this edition of Poverty Profile is a chapter focusing on Aboriginal peoples[1]. From the Council's perspective, it is crucial that governments in Canada make greater efforts to reduce and prevent poverty among Aboriginal peoples taking into account the context in which they live. Information from the SLID database on the situation of some Aboriginal people is provided in the regular chapters of Poverty Profile. This data source is limited, however, in its coverage of the Aboriginal population in Canada. Furthermore, different types of information are needed to better describe the circumstances of Aboriginal peoples, which are unique and not well understood by most non-Aboriginal Canadians. For example, the fact that different Aboriginal peoples have different legal status is one result of the Indian Act of 1876, which required North American Indians to be registered and it continues to affect many aspects of social and economic life.

The Aboriginal chapter, therefore, looks different than the rest of Poverty Profile and much of the data will not be as current, having been taken from the 1996 Census and earlier sources. As this chapter was being written, new data were being collected through a new Aboriginal Peoples Survey. The results of this survey and data from the 2001 Census of Population will be available from Statistics Canada in about a year and the Council intends to use the new data for more in-depth research.

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[1] For the purposes of this chapter, data are provided for the most part for persons who have self-identified as Aboriginal, including Indians, Inuit and Metis. This concept is consistent with the Council's mandate regarding equity and needs-based issues for low-income Canadians.

The National Council of Welfare hopes that this report will shed some light on poverty in Canada, a subject that is much discussed but little understood. Myths and stereotypes about poverty and the people who live in poverty, whether briefly or for many years, are deeply rooted in our society. We hope this report will help dispel these misconceptions and spur governments into using all the tools at their disposal to make it possible for all Canadians to share in the great bounty our country has to offer. Most importantly, we hope it will point governments toward their priorities for the new century: reducing the costs of poverty that affect all Canadians and investing our resources wisely to ensure a fairer opportunity for everyone to benefit from the prosperity Canada enjoys.

POVERTY IN CANADA: KEY PATTERNS AND TRENDS

GENERAL TRENDS, 1998 TO 1999

- In 1999, poverty rates for most families and individuals in Canada decreased. Poverty rates among all Canadians dropped by 0.7 percentage points from 16.9 percent in 1998 to 16.2 percent in 1999[1]. Poverty rates for families similarly fell by 0.8 percentage points, from 13 percent to 12.2 percent. The poverty rate for unattached individuals also declined, by 0.5 percentage points from 39.4 percent in 1998 to 38.9 percent. The child poverty rate also improved by a bare 0.5 percentage points from 19.2 percent to 18.7 percent.
- However, few of the improvements in poverty levels approached the repeatedly strong performance of the Canadian economy for eight consecutive years, including the impressive national economic growth rate of nearly 5 percent between 1998 and 1999.
- Poverty rates actually worsened for some Canadians. The poverty rate for unattached senior women increased to 48.5 percent in 1999 by 0.6 percentage points from 47.9 percent; the poverty rate for couples under 65 without children under 18 moved up by 0.3 percentage points from 8.3 percent to 8.6 percent. Similarly, the poverty level among unattached men under 65 slightly increased by 0.2 percentage points from 33 percent to 33.2 percent.
- Single-parent fathers were the only group for whom improvement in the pre-tax poverty rate surpassed the national economic growth rate of 5 percent. Their poverty rate fell by 5.1 percentage points from 23.1 percent to 18 percent.
- For senior couples, the poverty rate decreased more moderately by 2.3 percentage points from 7 percent but reached a record low of 4.7 percent in 1999; for unattached women under 65, the poverty rate moved down by 1.3 percentage points from 43.6 percent to 42.3 percent; for single-parent mothers, the poverty rate decreased by 1.1 percentage points from 52.9 percent to 51.8 percent.

POVERTY LEVELS AND THE AVERAGE POVERTY RATE, 1999

- In 1999, there were 1,025,000 families and 1,677,000 unattached individuals living in poverty in Canada.
- The 1999 poverty rates for certain key groups, especially single-parents and unattached individuals of all ages were substantially higher than the average poverty levels among all Canadians. Couples had poverty rates lower than the average poverty rate of 12.2 percent for families and of 16.2 percent for individuals.
- In 1999, 51.8 percent of single-parent mothers, 38.9 percent of all unattached individuals, 42.3 percent of unattached women under 65, 33.2 percent of unattached men under 65,

[1] All measures here are based on pre-tax poverty lines. The effect of taking income tax into account varies across different populations. More information on post-tax rates is provided throughout the report.

48.5 percent of unattached senior women and 31.9 percent of unattached senior men were poor. The poverty rates among single-parent mothers and unattached women were more than four times higher than the 1999 average level for all Canadians; the poverty rates among unattached men of all ages were just slightly less than three times the average poverty rate.

HISTORICAL TRENDS, 1980-1999

- Whether or not poverty rates improved, stagnated, or worsened between 1998 and 1999, for most families and individuals pre-tax poverty rates were higher than historical levels. About a total of 4.9 million Canadians lived in poverty in 1999. This was more than one million or 26.2 percent more than in 1989, the last full year before the last recession.
- Even couples under 65 with or without children under 18 have been better off in the past than they were between 1998 and 1999. In 1989, the pre-tax poverty rate for couples with children was 8.5 percent—1.9 percentage points lower than their 1999 pre-tax poverty rate of 10.4 percent. For couples with no children under 18, the 1999 rate was a decline from the low of 6.7 percent set in 1980.
- The increase in the number of couples without children with incomes below 50 percent of the pre-tax poverty line, from 34,000 families in 1998 to 43,000 families, contrasts sharply with the comparatively low number of 27,000 couples without children living at less than 50 percent of the poverty line in 1989.
- Between 1993 and 1998, more than seven million Canadians had lived in poverty in one of the six years. More than a quarter, or about 2.2 million, were children under 18 years of age. Sixty-two percent, or about 4.6 million persons, were persons of working age, 18 to 64. About 1.1 million were youth aged 18 to 24 years.
- Over 1.5 million Canadians lived in long-term poverty for all six years from 1993 through 1998. More than 30 percent, or 459,000, of those who experienced this long duration of poverty were children under 18 years of age.

POVERTY AND GENDER

- Women's pre-tax poverty rates exceeded men's in almost all categories ranging from 9.1 percentage points among unattached individuals to 33.8 percentage points among single parents.
- In 1999, men's incomes exceeded women's on average by $4,882 among unattached individuals under 65 years of age, by $5,837 among unattached seniors and by $18,258 among single parents.
- Among single parents, more than 70 percent of the men had incomes that exceeded 125 percent of the poverty line but fewer than 40 percent of the women had similar levels of income.

POVERTY AND CHILDREN

- In 1999, the child poverty rate was 18.7 percent. This was higher than both the poverty rate of 15.2 percent recorded in 1989 and than the 1999 average poverty rate of 16.2 percent. Moreover, in 1999, most Canadian poor families with children needed, on average, more than $8,000 dollars before taxes and more than $5,000 after taxes just to meet the poverty line.
- Tragically, children under six were the most likely of all age groups to have lived in poverty for all six years, from 1993 to 1998.

POVERTY AND IMMIGRANT OR MINORITY STATUS

- Between 1993 and 1998, immigrant visible minorities formed about 6 percent of the Canadian population. Yet about 42.5 percent of immigrant visible minorities lived in poverty in at least one year of the six-year period, compared to 29.5 percent of the total population. Moreover, 15.6 percent of immigrant visible minorities lived in poverty for all six years, compared to 5 percent of persons who are not visible minorities.
- Between 1993 and 1999, Aboriginal persons living off reserve comprised 0.9 percent of the Canadian population. Of these, 49.4 percent were among the more than seven million persons who lived in poverty in at least one of the six years. Furthermore, an estimated 12.6 percent of Aboriginal people living off reserve were among the more than 1.5 million persons who lived in long-term poverty between 1993 and 1998.

POVERTY AND EDUCATION

- The risk of poverty decreased with years of schooling and with family status. Single-parent mothers with no high school diploma had the highest poverty rate at 82.3 percent. Families where the major income earner had at least a university degree had a poverty rate of 6 percent.

- Although level of education and poverty rates are somewhat inversely related, education is not always a guarantee against poverty. Of the 1,025,000 families that were poor in 1999, 64.2 percent of the heads had a high school diploma or better; 52 percent of the 1,667,000 poor unattached individuals in 1999 had a high school diploma or better.

POVERTY AND LABOUR FORCE ATTACHMENT

- The poverty rate for unattached individuals under 65 years of age and for families declined as their weeks of work increased in 1999. Among unattached individuals, the poverty rate for persons with no paid work was 80.1 percent; the comparative figure was 18.4 percent for persons who worked 49 to 52 weeks. Similarly, among families, the poverty rate for those with no paid work was 56 percent. The comparative figure for families with 103 or more weeks of paid work, the equivalent of two full-year workers, was 3 percent.
- These figures show how important employment is but that being gainfully employed is far from a full insurance against poverty. More than 40 percent of the more than one million Canadian families living in poverty in 1999 were headed by persons who were employed. Single-parent mothers working full-time, full-year still had a poverty rate of 19.7 percent.

POVERTY AND SENIORS

- The poverty rate for seniors was practically halved, from 34 percent in 1980 to 17.7 percent in 1999, and by more than half for senior couples, from 17.5 percent in 1980 to a record low of 4.7 in 1999. The poverty rate among senior unattached women also dropped significantly from 70.1 percent in 1980 to 48.5 percent in 1999. In a similar vein, the poverty rate among senior men fell from 56.7 percent in 1980 to 31.9 percent in 1999. Still, the poverty rates for unattached seniors remains very high compared to couples. That the poverty rate for senior women actually worsened from 47.9 percent in 1998 to 48.5 percent is disturbing.

I. RECENT POVERTY TRENDS

In 1999, as in 1998, most poverty rates dropped slightly. However, they remained higher than they were in the years immediately before the 1990-1991 recession. There were over 4.8 million poor people in Canada in 1999. Of these, more than 1.3 million were children.

During the same period from 1998 to 1999, Canada's Gross Domestic Product grew from $919.8 billion to $966.4 billion—an increase of nearly 5 percent. If this real rate of economic growth were to be used as a yardstick, most Canadian poverty rates actually stagnated in 1999 as they had throughout the 1990s.

Notably, the poverty rate among children under 18 years of age fell by only 0.5 percentage points from 19.2 percent in 1998 to 18.7 percent in 1999. Similarly, poverty rates for persons under 65 years of age, especially single-parent mothers, young adults and students aged 18 to 24 years remained persistently high despite eight consecutive years of economic growth.

Poverty rates among seniors overall sustained a downward trend, falling from 19.7 percent in 1998 to 17.7 percent in 1999. Senior couples and unattached male seniors took the largest share of this decrease. For senior couples, the poverty rate decreased from 7 percent in 1998 to 4.7 percent in 1999; for senior unattached men, it decreased from 35.1 percent in 1998 to 31.9 percent in 1999.

In significant contrast to these downward trends, unattached senior women, whose poverty rate was already high at 47.9 percent in 1998, had an even higher rate of 48.5 percent in 1999.

This chapter presents major national trends in poverty rates from 1980 through 1999 using two approaches. The first looks at Canadians as individuals regardless of their family circumstances, the second looks at people by family type. For the most part, our historical analysis focuses mostly on pre-tax poverty rates. However, towards the end of the chapter, we compare different population groups on pre-tax and post-tax rates as well.

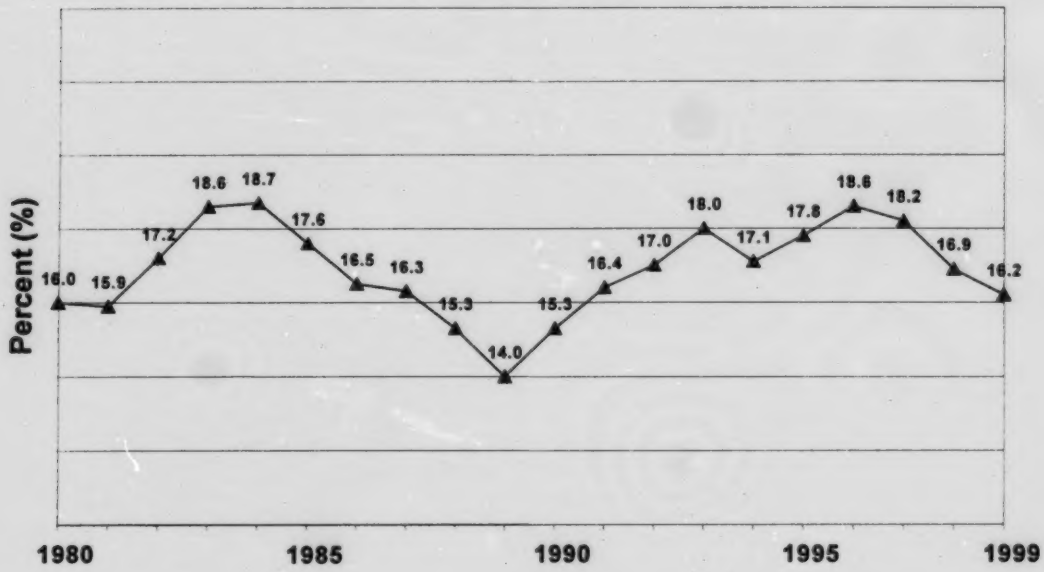
ALL INDIVIDUALS

One way to examine poverty is to look at the number of individuals who are living in poverty. Figure 1.1 presents the poverty rate for each year from 1980 to 1999. Tables at the end of the chapter provide additional detail on the number of poor people and the total population in question. Table 1.11 presents the total number of poor people in Canada and the total population, as well as poverty rates from 1980 to1999.

In 1980, the poverty rate was 16 percent and about 3.9 million persons were poor. Following the recession of 1981-1982, the number of poor people rose to about 4.7 million and the poverty rate peaked at 18.7 per cent in 1984—a record high for the entire two decades that ran from 1980 to 1999. Subsequently, in 1989, the number of poor persons dropped to about 3.8 million and the poverty rate decreased to 14 percent. The latter was the record low for the two decades from 1980 to 1999.

However, by 1993, the poverty rate had risen up to 18 percent and the number of poor people had climbed to more than five million. By 1996, the poverty rate hit 18.6 percent and poor people numbered about 5.5 million.

Figure 1.1: Poverty Rates for All Persons, 1980-1999

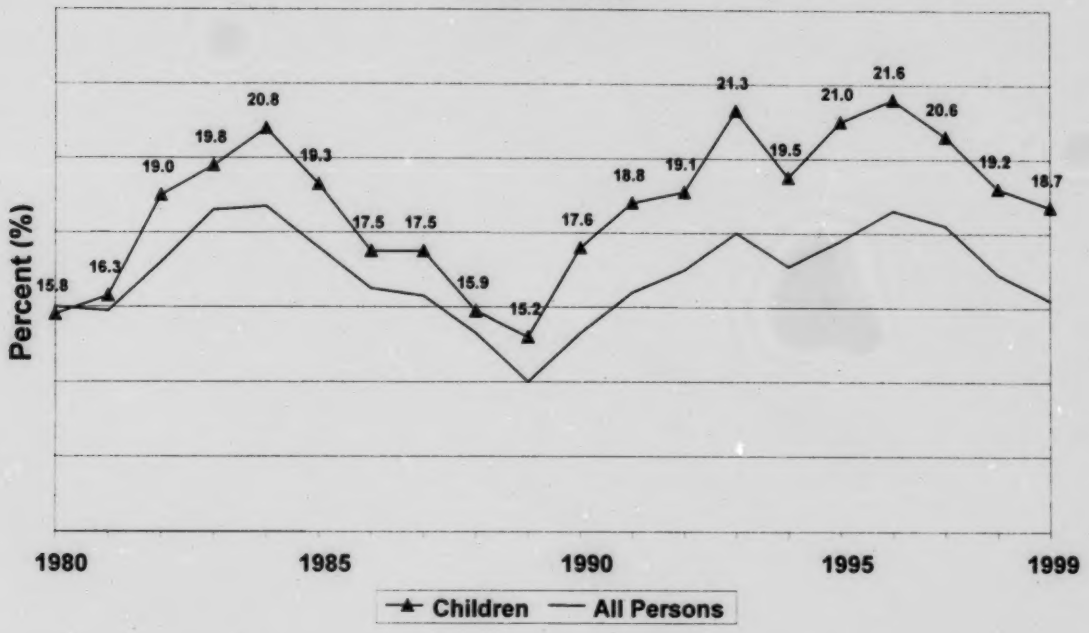


A new downward trend began in 1997 when the poverty rate was 18.2 percent and there were 5.1 million poor persons. A three-year decline and a poverty rate of 16.2 percent among poor persons in 1999 represent a sustained improvement for the first time since the late mid-80s. But this rate is still higher than it was at the beginning of the 90s. There were about 0.7 million more poor people in 1999 at the close of the decade than in 1990.

CHILDREN

Child poverty rates followed a similar trend as Figure 1.2 demonstrates (see also Table 1.12). In the 1980s, both the child poverty rate and number of poor children rose with the recession of 1981-1982. The two figures peaked in 1984. They then declined for the rest of the 1980s. In 1989, when the House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution to eliminate child poverty by 2000, there were about one million poor children and the child poverty rate was 15.2 percent.

Figure 1.2: Poverty Rates for Children, 1980-1999



The recession of 1990-1991 drove child poverty up once again. It spiked at 21.3 percent in 1993, when nearly 1.5 million children lived in poverty. It peaked at 21.6 percent in 1996 when more than 1.5 million children were poor. A modest decline in both the number of poor children and the child poverty rate began in 1997 and continued in 1999. In 1997, over 1.4 million children lived in poverty and the poverty rate was 20.6 percent. In 1999, the child poverty rate fell to 18.7 percent, representing about 1.3 million children.

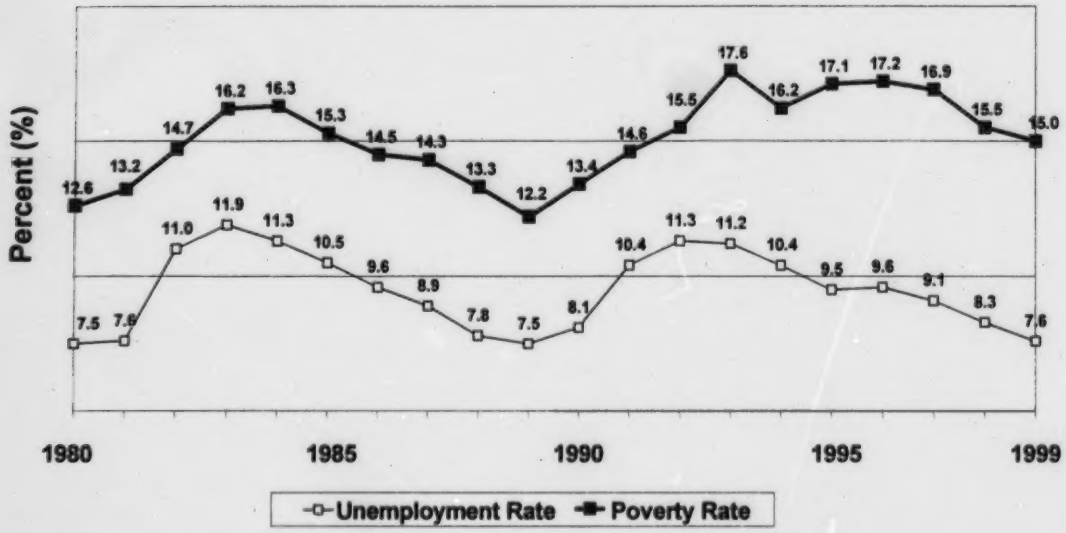
The 1999 child poverty rate, however, still exceeded that of 1989 by 3.5 percentage points. Had the 1989 parliamentary resolution against child poverty been taken seriously, the difference between the 1989 and 1999 child poverty rates should have been higher and reversed.

ADULTS AGED 18 TO 64 YEARS

Children are poor because their parents are poor, and a lack of good jobs is one of the main reasons for poverty among parents. The poverty rates for adults under age 65 tend to move up and down in line with changes in the unemployment rate. However, the link between changes in the unemployment rate and changes in the poverty rate was weaker during the 1990s than during the 1980s. Compared to the 1980s, poverty rates in the 1990s did not fall as rapidly as unemployment rates.

Figure 1.3 shows the average annual unemployment rate for people 15 and older and the poverty rate for people aged 18 to 64, the group most likely to be in the labour force. In 1999, the unemployment rate was 7.6 percent and the poverty rate was 15.2 percent.

Figure 1.3: Unemployment and Poverty Among Working-Age People, 1980-1999



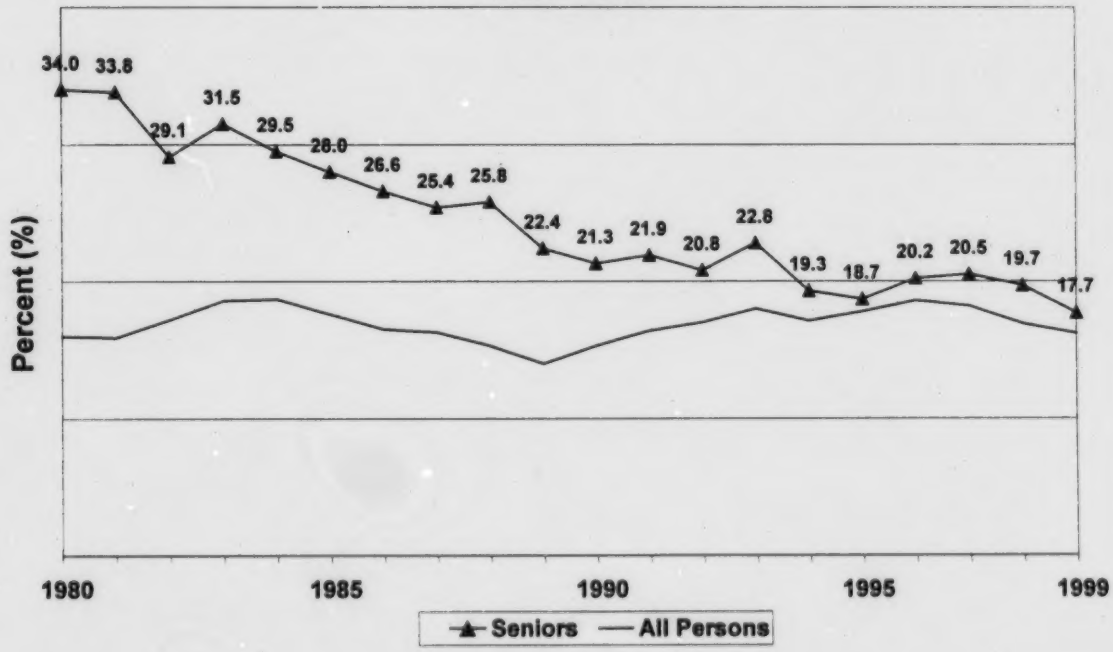
Until 1993, the unemployment rate and the poverty rate moved together. As the unemployment rate increased, the poverty rate increased and as the unemployment rate fell, the poverty rate fell. In the recovery from the 1990-1991 recession, the pattern changed. The unemployment rate steadily decreased, but the poverty rate was stickier. In fact, the poverty rate for adults under age 65 actually increased slightly. It was only between 1998 and 1999, after a downward trend in the unemployment rate over six years, that the poverty rate for working age people decreased first to 15.5 percent in 1998 and then to 15.1 percent in 1999. The post-1991 cycle of economic growth appears to be bypassing many people at the lower end of the income scale.

SENIORS

Most seniors are not in the labour force; consequently, they are relatively unaffected by high unemployment rates. The poverty rates for people 65 and older are more a reflection of the effectiveness of public and private pension programs than of the state of the economy in any given year.

While the total number of seniors increased by 68 percent between 1980 and 1999, the number of seniors who lived in poverty fell by 15 percent. In 1980, about 742,000 seniors lived in poverty compared to about 646,000 seniors in 1999 (see Table 1.13). As Figure 1.4 below shows, the poverty rate for seniors dropped sharply from 34 percent in 1980 to 17.7 percent in 1999.

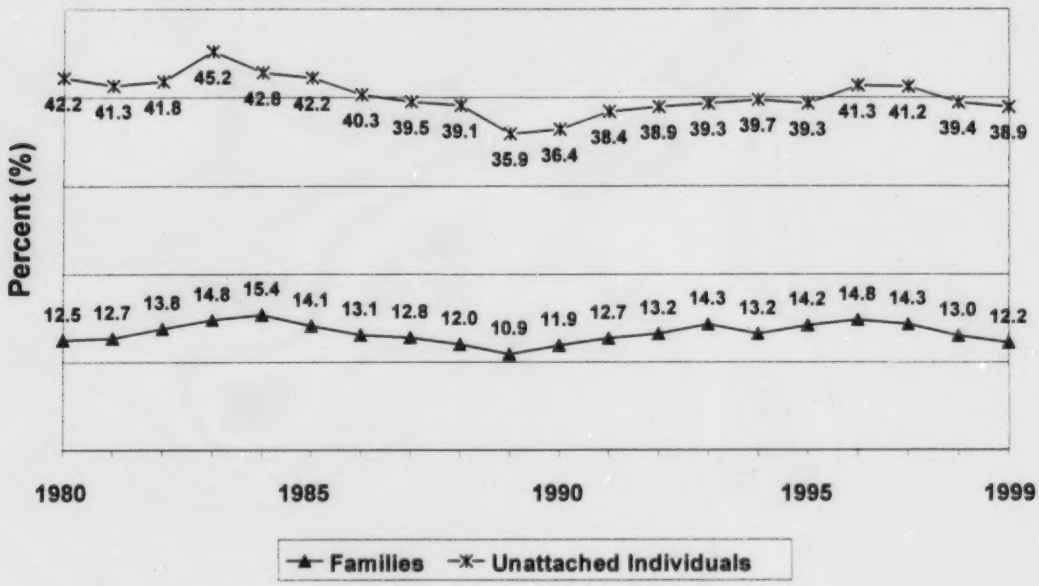
Figure 1.4: Poverty Rates for Seniors, 1980-1999



Government programs and policies dating back to the 1960s were largely responsible for the improvement in the poverty rate among seniors. Among the more important steps in decreasing poverty for seniors was the creation of the federal government's Old Age Security (OAS) program plus the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for low-income seniors as well as the creation of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) in 1966. The CPP and QPP were the result of co-operation between the federal and provincial governments to make sure workers put away a modest amount of money every year for their retirement. The CPP still operates as a partnership between the two levels of government. There are indications however that some senior Canadians may face barriers that prevent them from taking full advantage of these programs. For example, a recent C.D. Howe study found that more than 380,000 low-income seniors potentially eligible for the GIS had not

applied[1]. These people could be a substantial portion of the 646,000 seniors living in poverty in 1999.

Figure 1.5: Poverty Rates for Families and Unattached Individuals, 1980-1999



POVERTY TRENDS FOR FAMILIES AND UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

While the poverty statistics for all persons give a good overview of poverty, it is often more revealing to look at poor people in terms of families and unattached individuals as shown in Figure 1.5 and Tables 1.14 and 1.15. Poverty rates for unattached people are normally two to three times higher than the rates for families. In 1999, the poverty rate for unattached individuals was 38.9 percent while the rate for families was 12.2 percent—a ratio of 3.2 to one.

The main reason families have consistently lower poverty rates than unattached individuals is that they often have a second family member in the paid labour force, either on a part-time or a full-time basis. They are also able to take advantage of economies of scale by sharing housing and other goods and services.

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[1] Shillington, Richard, C. D. Howe Institute, "The Dark Side of Targeting: Retirement Savings for Low-Income Canadians" in *The Pension Papers* (1999). See also *The Guaranteed Income Supplement: The Duty to Reach All*, Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (2001).

The percentage of younger married couples with both spouses in the work force has grown dramatically during the last generation, and two-earner couples now far outnumber one-earner couples. Increasingly, older couples are made up of spouses who both had employment outside the home. Such former dual-earner couples both get pension benefits from the CPP or the QPP and the OAS in their own right. One or both may also have private pensions.

An even better view of poverty comes by breaking down families and unattached individuals into their major sub-categories. Four main types of families accounted for roughly 80 percent of all poor families in 1999: couples where the head of the family is 65 or older; couples under 65 with children under 18; couples under 65 without children under 18; and single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18.

Less common family types made up the remaining 20 percent of poor families in 1999, including single-parent fathers with children under 18, brothers and sisters or other relatives who lived together and same-sex couples. In many cases, sample sizes from Statistics Canada surveys are too small for us to provide information on these less common family types.

Unattached individuals comprise four categories: men under 65; men 65 and older; women under 65; and women 65 and older.

The weight of a second wage-earner or second source of pension income becomes obvious from the poverty statistics for the four different types of families. The statistics also reveal the additional impact of parental responsibilities. The poverty rates for families headed by single-parent mothers have, over time, been five to six times higher on average than the poverty rates for couples with or without children (for details on the numbers of families in each category and poverty rates, see Tables 1.16, 1.17, 1.18 and 1.19).

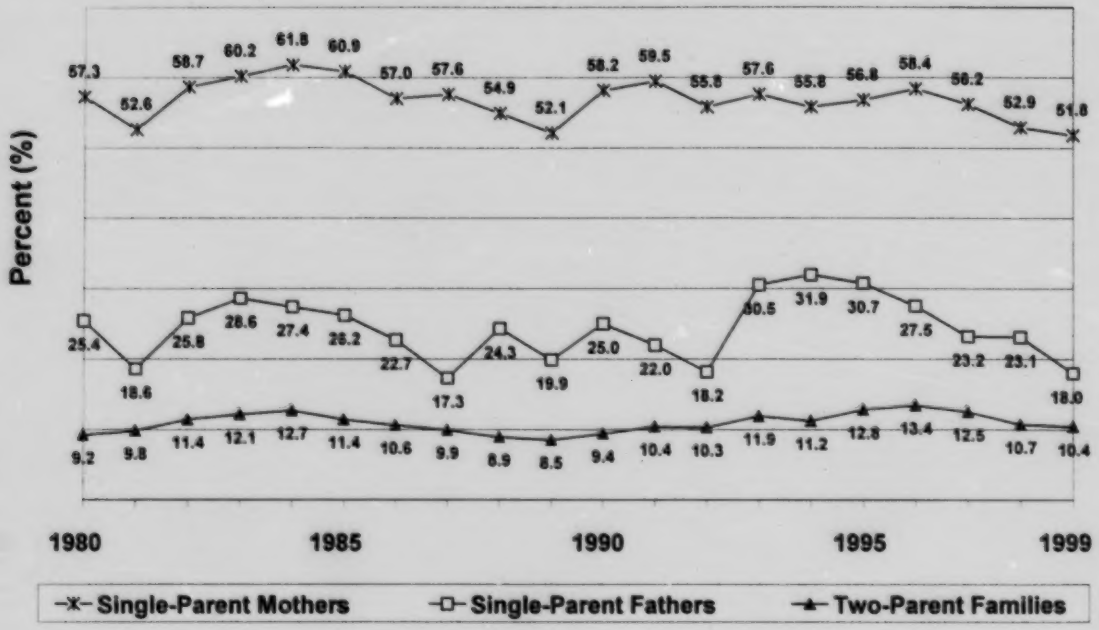
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Figure 1.6 shows clearly how much more vulnerable to poverty single-mother families are compared to single-father and two-parent families.

Both the number of poor couples with children and the poverty rate rose and fell with the overall state of the economy from 1980 through the early 1990s. The two figures got stuck at relatively high levels through the mid-1990s. In 1999, the number of poor couples with children and the poverty rate dropped to the lowest levels since 1992. There were 321,000 poor couples under 65 with children under 18 in 1999, and the poverty rate was 10.4 percent. Nonetheless, these figures were still above the pre-recession lows set in 1989, when there were 260,000 poor couples under 65 with children and the poverty rate was 8.5 percent.

The total number of couples with children (both poor and non-poor couples) barely changed at all between 1980 and 1999. In contrast, the total number of single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18 grew significantly from 360,000 in 1980 to 570,000 in 1999.

Figure 1.6: Poverty Rates for Families with Children, 1980-1999



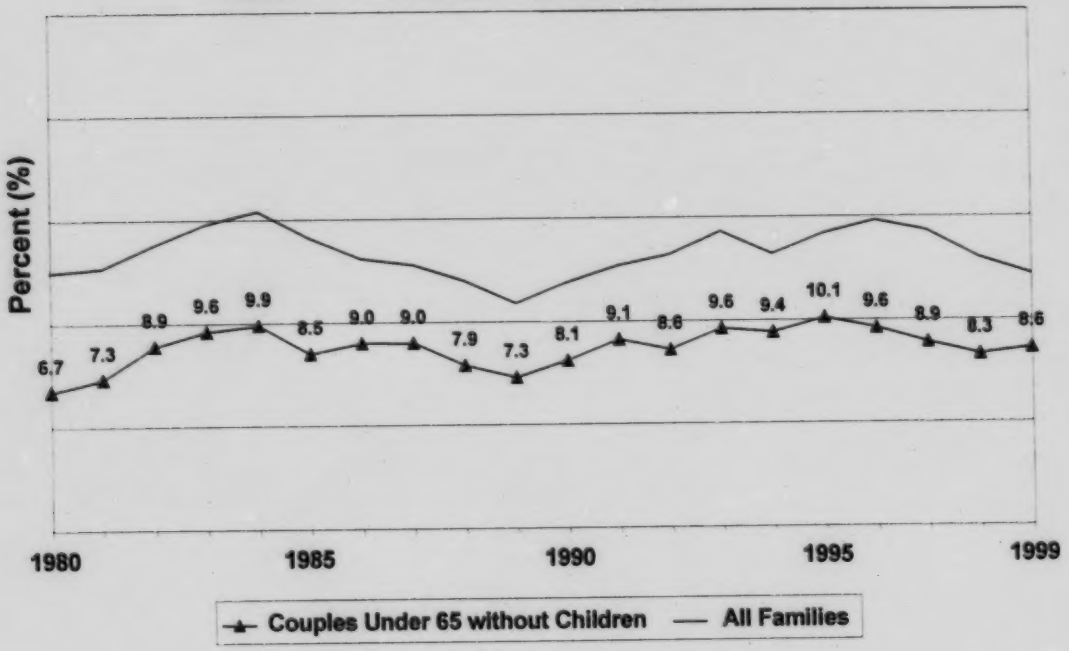
The rise in unattached parenthood among mothers was matched by a rise in the number of single-parent mothers living in poverty. During the recession in the early 1980s, the number of poor single-parent mothers increased slowly along with the total number of single-parent mothers. In the recovery from this recession, the number of poor single-parent mothers declined.

Following the 1990-1991 recession, the annual numbers of single-parent mothers jumped, increasing from 238,000 in 1989 to 351,000 in 1993, the highest number in the 1980-99 period. That year also saw the highest number of single-parent mothers overall at 610,000. The number of unattached mothers has gone up and down since then, sitting at 570,000 in 1999, a small decrease from 1998. The number living in poverty has decreased each year from 1997 to 1999.

Poverty rates for families headed by single-parent mothers have remained unacceptably high over the past two decades. Between 1980 and 1999, the poverty rate fluctuated between 51.8 percent and 61.8 percent. Continuing a steady improvement since 1997, the 1999 poverty rate of 51.8 percent represented the lowest rate for single-parent mothers. However, single-mother families were the only family type with a majority of its members still living below the poverty line in 1999.

From 1980 to 1999, poverty rates for single-parent fathers[2] were higher than for couples with children but lower than for single-parent mothers. As with single-parent mothers, the number of single-parent fathers also rose, almost doubling from 57,000 in 1980 to 108,000 in 1999. The ratio of single-parent mothers to single-parent fathers in 1999 was 2.7 to one, much lower than the ratio of 3.6 to one in 1980 but still quite high. The disparity in the poverty rates of the two groups is also greater. In 1980, the poverty rate was 57.3 percent among single-parent mothers but only 25.4 percent among single-parent fathers. In 1999, the poverty rate among single-parent fathers had declined to 18 percent while the rate for single-parent mothers was at 51.8 percent.

Figure 1.7: Poverty Rates for Couples Under 65 without Children, 1980-1999



FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN

In recent years, the patterns of poverty among couples without children were strikingly different for couples under age 65 and senior couples. Tables 1.19 and 1.20 give details for the years 1980 through 1999.

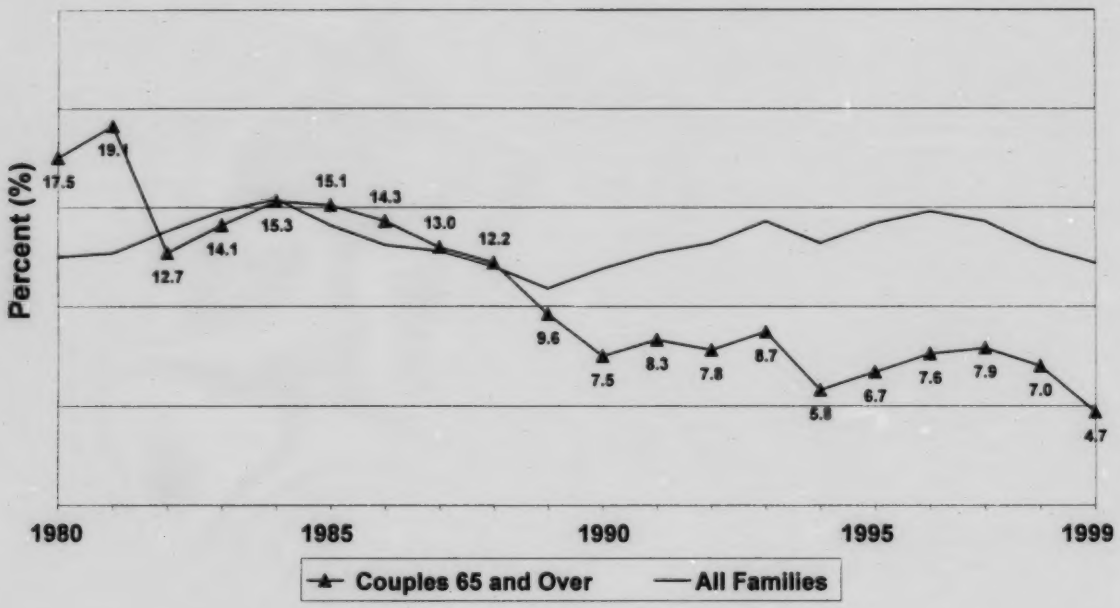
Over the years, the total number of couples under 65 without children gradually rose. The number of poor couples without children was also higher in the 1990s than it was in the 1980s. Between 1998 and 1999, there were 18,000 fewer poor couples over the age of 65—a

[2] Note that information related to single-parent fathers throughout the document must be interpreted with some caution given the very small numbers of this family type.

drop of 2.3 percentage points in the poverty rate for senior couples from 7 percent in 1998 to 4.7 percent in 1999. However, the proportion of couples without children increased from 8.3 percent in 1998 to 8.6 percent in 1999. The lowest poverty rate for couples under 65 without children was last recorded at 6.7 percent in 1980.

The total number of couples aged 65 without children and older also rose between 1980 and 1999. However, both the number of poor senior couples and the poverty rate among senior couples dropped sharply. There were 646,000 poor senior couples in 1999. In 1980 there were 742,000 poor senior couples. Between 1980 and 1999, the poverty rate among senior couples was reduced to 4.7 percent from 17.5 percent.

Figure 1.8: Poverty Rates for Couples 65 and Over, 1980-1999

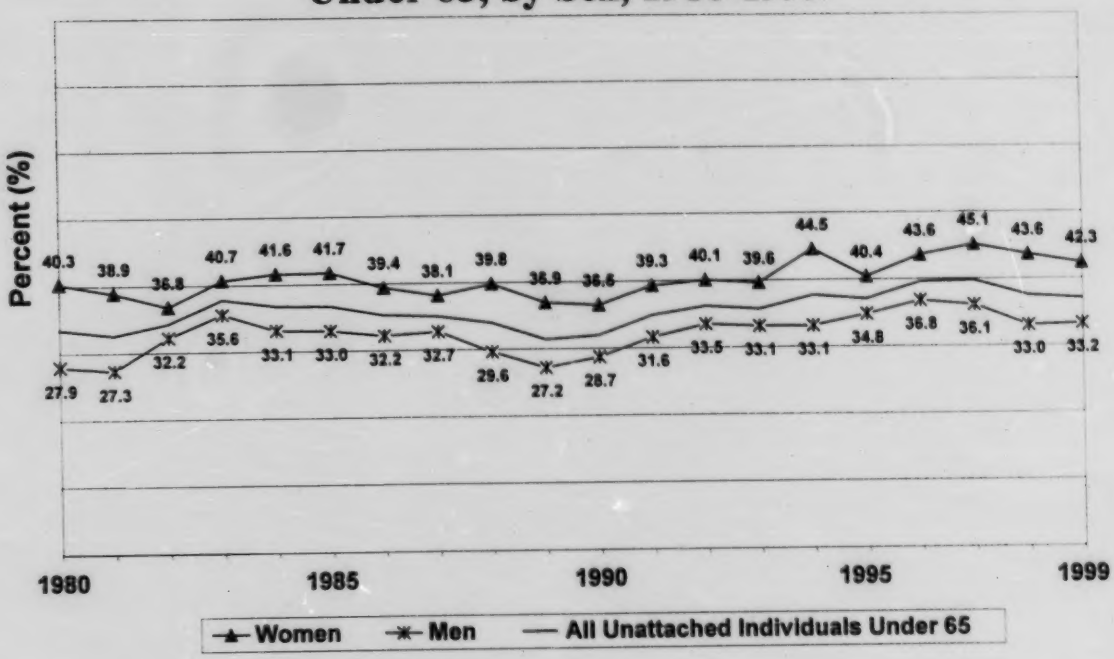


UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

From the 1980s through the 1990s, poverty statistics varied greatly between unattached women and unattached men. There were also age-related differences between unattached seniors and unattached persons aged less than 65 years. Generally, unattached men had lower poverty rates than unattached women; seniors had lower poverty rates than persons aged less than 65 years.

All sub-categories of unattached individuals had poverty rates that are substantially higher than the rates for married couples. However, the poverty rates for unattached persons hardly approached the very high rates for households led by single-parent mothers.

Figure 1.9: Poverty Rates for Unattached Individuals Under 65, by Sex, 1980-1999



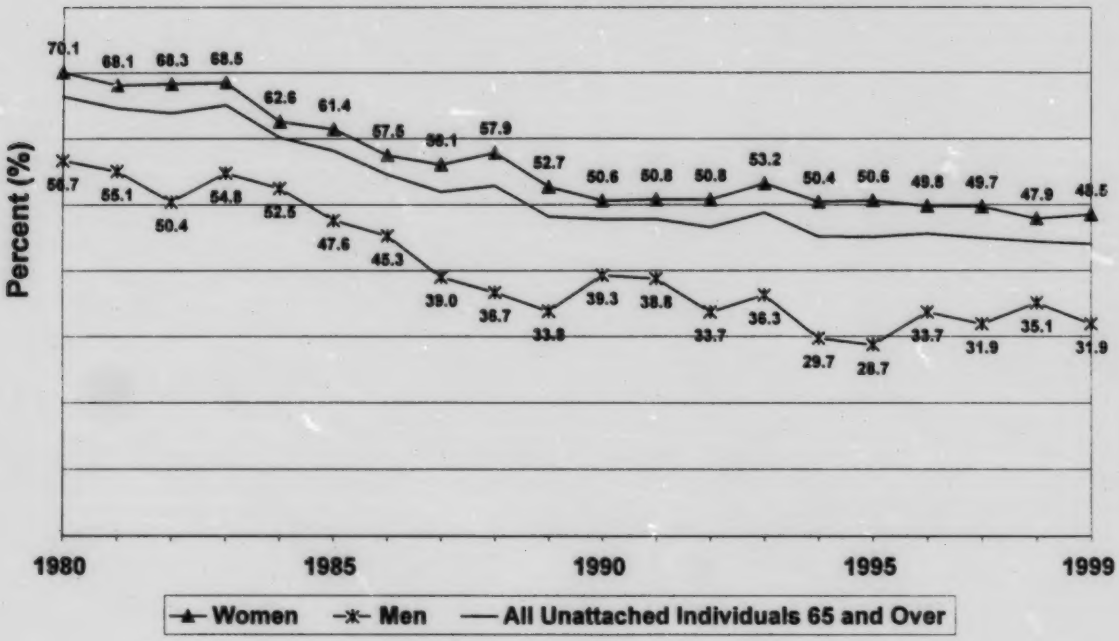
Figures 1.9 and 1.10 portray trends in poverty among unattached men and women. The poverty rates for individuals under 65 tended to rise and fall with unemployment rates until the years following the 1990-1991 recession. In contrast, the rates for older individuals fell more or less steadily.

The poverty rate for women under 65 was 40.3 percent in 1980 and 42.3 percent in 1999. The comparable rates for men were 27.9 percent and 33.2 percent. The gap between women and men was largest in 1980 at 12.4 percentage points. It was smallest in 1982 at 4.6 percentage points. Between 1998 and 1999, the poverty rate for men increased by 0.2 percentage points; however, the poverty rate for women fell by 1.3 percent. Nonetheless, the gap between men and women in 1999 was high at 9.1 percentage points.

For unattached people 65 and older, the poverty rate for women went from 70.1 percent in 1980 to a record low of 47.9 percent in 1998. However, it then increased slightly by 0.6 percentage points from 47.9 percent in 1998 to 48.5 percent in 1999. The rate for senior men dropped from 56.7 percent in 1980 to 31.9 percent in 1999.

The lowest poverty rate among unattached senior men was in 1995 at 28.7 percent. The gap between senior men and senior women was highest in 1995 at 21.9 percentage points. At that point, the poverty rate was 28.7 percent among men, compared to 50.6 percent among women. The gap between the two groups was smallest in 1984 at 10.1 percentage points. In 1984, the poverty rate was 52.5 percent among senior men and 62.6 percent among senior women.

Figure 1.10: Poverty Rates for Unattached Individuals 65 and Over, by Sex, 1980-1999



1999 PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES

Across all family types, the income tax system had a moderating effect on pre-tax poverty rates. This is because a progressive tax system taxes those with higher incomes at a higher rate. Families and individuals who are most likely to move above the poverty line using post-tax measures are those who have incomes very close to the pre-tax poverty line. A lower post-tax poverty rate does not mean that people below the pre-tax poverty line have any more income. In fact, even very poor people usually pay tax, as we will show in more detail in later chapters. A lower post-tax poverty rate means that non-poor people have paid proportionally more tax so the relative position changes.

While the poverty rate for virtually every family type was lower after taxes, there was a larger impact for some family types than for others. Tables 1.23 through 1.25 give the pre-tax and post-tax rates for the diverse family groups.

ALL PERSONS

The difference in pre-tax and post-tax poverty rates for all Canadians was modest. After taxes, the poverty rate was 4.4 percentage points lower at 11.8 percent, meaning that in 1999, there were about 1.3 million fewer persons considered poor. Among the different categories of individuals, seniors had the largest difference in poverty rates after taxes were considered. The post-tax poverty rate of all seniors was 8.2 percent, 9.5 percent lower than the pre-tax poverty rate of 17.7 percent. The difference in poverty rates for children was more modest. The child poverty rate was lower by 4.8 percentage points, at 13.9 percent.

Generally, unattached individuals saw a greater post-tax impact on their poverty rates than did families. The post-tax poverty rate for unattached individuals was lower by 9 percentage points at 29.9 percent. In contrast, the post-tax poverty rate for all families was lower only by 3.6 percentage points at 8.6 percent.

FAMILIES

Among families with children, single-parent mothers saw the largest post-tax impact on their poverty rates at 10.5 percentage points (51.8 percent to 41.3 percent). They still, however, had the highest poverty rate of all family types. Single-parent fathers had a post-tax poverty rate of 13.5 percent, 4.5 percentage points lower than the pre-tax rate. Couples under 65 saw the least reduction in poverty rates but they had the lowest poverty rate among families with children. Their pre-tax poverty rate was 10.4 percent, compared to a post-tax rate of 7.3 percent.

Couples under 65 years with no children saw a change of 2.5 percentage points in their poverty rate from 8.6 percent before taxes to 6.1 percent after taxes. However, among families whose heads were under 65 years of age, they had the lowest pre-tax and post-tax poverty rates.

UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

Among unattached persons, seniors saw the largest post-tax impact on their poverty rates with a 22.3 percentage point difference between the pre-tax rate of 44 percent and the post-tax poverty rate of 21.7 percent. Women seniors saw an even larger impact of 24.9 percentage points from 48.5 percent to 23.6 percent. In contrast, the impact for unattached senior men was 15.3 percentage points to a post-tax rate of 16.6 percent from a pre-tax rate of 31.9 percent. Nonetheless, the post-tax poverty rate was still higher among senior women than among senior men and poor senior women outnumbered poor senior men by a ratio of about four to one.

For unattached women under 65, the post-tax poverty rate was lower by 4.5 percentage points compared to 3.6 percentage points for unattached men under 65. However, after taxes, the poverty rate among women at 37.8 percent was still higher than the poverty rate of 29.6 percent among men.

TABLE 1.11: POVERTY TRENDS, ALL PERSONS, 1980-1999			
	Poor Persons	All Persons	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	3,871,000	24,135,000	16.0%
1981	3,914,000	24,579,000	15.9%
1982	4,269,000	24,838,000	17.2%
1983	4,660,000	25,062,000	18.6%
1984	4,745,000	25,319,000	18.7%
1985	4,499,000	25,564,000	17.6%
1986	4,258,000	25,829,000	16.5%
1987	4,254,000	26,142,000	16.3%
1988	4,040,000	26,475,000	15.3%
1989	3,771,000	26,847,000	14.0%
1990	4,181,000	27,260,000	15.3%
1991	4,545,000	27,682,000	16.4%
1992	4,767,000	28,119,000	17.0%
1993	5,143,000	28,530,000	18.0%
1994	4,941,000	28,867,000	17.1%
1995	5,205,000	29,197,000	17.8%
1996	5,481,000	29,415,000	18.6%
1997	5,415,000	29,730,000	18.2%
1998	5,055,000	29,994,000	16.9%
1999	4,886,000	30,249,000	16.2%

TABLE 1.12: POVERTY TRENDS, CHILDREN UNDER 18, 1980-1999			
	Poor Children	All Children	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	1,061,000	6,713,000	15.8%
1981	1,091,000	6,701,000	16.3%
1982	1,259,000	6,626,000	19.0%
1983	1,299,000	6,570,000	19.8%
1984	1,364,000	6,543,000	20.8%
1985	1,261,000	6,524,000	19.3%
1986	1,149,000	6,562,000	17.5%
1987	1,151,000	6,573,000	17.5%
1988	1,054,000	6,618,000	15.9%
1989	1,016,000	6,680,000	15.2%
1990	1,195,000	6,773,000	17.6%
1991	1,282,000	6,833,000	18.8%
1992	1,317,000	6,911,000	19.1%
1993	1,484,000	6,956,000	21.3%
1994	1,362,000	6,997,000	19.5%
1995	1,472,000	7,012,000	21.0%
1996	1,533,000	7,095,000	21.6%
1997	1,459,000	7,081,000	20.6%
1998	1,353,000	7,052,000	19.2%
1999	1,313,000	7,028,000	18.7%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.13: POVERTY TRENDS, PEOPLE 65 AND OVER, 1980-1999			
	Poor Seniors	All Seniors	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	742,000	2,180,000	34.0%
1981	757,000	2,241,000	33.8%
1982	668,000	2,294,000	29.1%
1983	741,000	2,351,000	31.5%
1984	716,000	2,427,000	29.5%
1985	703,000	2,508,000	28.0%
1986	692,000	2,601,000	26.6%
1987	681,000	2,683,000	25.4%
1988	714,000	2,768,000	25.8%
1989	640,000	2,856,000	22.4%
1990	629,000	2,947,000	21.3%
1991	665,000	3,036,000	21.9%
1992	650,000	3,128,000	20.8%
1993	732,000	3,211,000	22.8%
1994	635,000	3,297,000	19.3%
1995	631,000	3,379,000	18.7%
1996	697,000	3,446,000	20.2%
1997	724,000	3,529,000	20.5%
1998	710,000	3,599,000	19.7%
1999	646,000	3,659,000	17.7%

TABLE 1.14: POVERTY TRENDS, FAMILIES, 1980-1999			
	Poor Families	All Families	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	815,000	6,500,000	12.5%
1981	842,000	6,654,000	12.7%
1982	935,000	6,786,000	13.8%
1983	1,008,000	6,818,000	14.8%
1984	1,079,000	7,012,000	15.4%
1985	998,000	7,098,000	14.1%
1986	938,000	7,171,000	13.1%
1987	927,000	7,251,000	12.8%
1988	888,000	7,414,000	12.0%
1989	820,000	7,516,000	10.9%
1990	910,000	7,621,000	11.9%
1991	977,000	7,697,000	12.7%
1992	1,051,000	7,938,000	13.2%
1993	1,143,000	7,981,000	14.3%
1994	1,072,000	8,102,000	13.2%
1995	1,173,000	8,257,000	14.2%
1996	1,216,000	8,190,000	14.8%
1997	1,182,000	8,252,000	14.3%
1998	1,082,000	8,296,000	13.0%
1999	1,025,000	8,406,000	12.2%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.15: POVERTY TRENDS, UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS, 1980-1999			
	Poor Unattached Individuals	All Unattached Individuals	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	1,118,000	2,653,000	42.2%
1981	1,120,000	2,712,000	41.3%
1982	1,130,000	2,703,000	41.8%
1983	1,295,000	2,866,000	45.2%
1984	1,218,000	2,846,000	42.8%
1985	1,258,000	2,983,000	42.2%
1986	1,245,000	3,092,000	40.3%
1987	1,290,000	3,270,000	39.5%
1988	1,296,000	3,315,000	39.1%
1989	1,206,000	3,358,000	35.9%
1990	1,279,000	3,518,000	36.4%
1991	1,408,000	3,671,000	38.4%
1992	1,425,000	3,658,000	38.9%
1993	1,500,000	3,814,000	39.3%
1994	1,525,000	3,836,000	39.7%
1995	1,521,000	3,871,000	39.3%
1996	1,644,000	3,982,000	41.3%
1997	1,696,000	4,111,000	41.2%
1998	1,676,000	4,256,000	39.4%
1999	1,667,000	4,279,000	38.9%

TABLE 1.16: POVERTY TRENDS, COUPLES UNDER 65 WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18, 1980-1999			
	Poor Couples Under 65 with Children	All Couples Under 65 with Children	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	283,000	3,073,000	9.2%
1981	302,000	3,089,000	9.8%
1982	349,000	3,060,000	11.4%
1983	373,000	3,068,000	12.1%
1984	381,000	3,009,000	12.7%
1985	346,000	3,027,000	11.4%
1986	323,000	3,054,000	10.6%
1987	300,000	3,018,000	9.9%
1988	273,000	3,070,000	8.9%
1989	260,000	3,070,000	8.5%
1990	289,000	3,070,000	9.4%
1991	320,000	3,071,000	10.4%
1992	314,000	3,059,000	10.3%
1993	366,000	3,064,000	11.9%
1994	346,000	3,091,000	11.2%
1995	402,000	3,135,000	12.8%
1996	421,000	3,137,000	13.4%
1997	390,000	3,125,000	12.5%
1998	327,000	3,062,000	10.7%
1999	321,000	3,076,000	10.4%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.17: POVERTY TRENDS, SINGLE-PARENT MOTHERS UNDER 65 WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18, 1980-1999

	Poor Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	All Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	206,000	360,000	57.3%
1981	187,000	354,000	52.6%
1982	228,000	389,000	58.7%
1983	233,000	387,000	60.2%
1984	264,000	427,000	61.8%
1985	253,000	416,000	60.9%
1986	230,000	403,000	57.0%
1987	243,000	423,000	57.6%
1988	244,000	444,000	54.9%
1989	238,000	457,000	52.1%
1990	283,000	486,000	58.2%
1991	296,000	497,000	59.5%
1992	337,000	604,000	55.8%
1993	351,000	610,000	57.6%
1994	309,000	554,000	55.8%
1995	321,000	565,000	56.8%
1996	328,000	563,000	58.4%
1997	311,000	553,000	56.2%
1998	307,000	580,000	52.9%
1999	295,000	570,000	51.8%

TABLE 1.18: POVERTY TRENDS, SINGLE-PARENT FATHERS UNDER 65 WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18, 1980-1999

	Poor Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	All Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	15,000	57,000	25.4%
1981	11,000	61,000	18.6%
1982	17,000	64,000	25.8%
1983	15,000	53,000	28.6%
1984	17,000	63,000	27.4%
1985	15,000	57,000	26.2%
1986	16,000	72,000	22.7%
1987	10,000	60,000	17.3%
1988	17,000	70,000	24.3%
1989	12,000	61,000	19.9%
1990	21,000	86,000	25.0%
1991	16,000	73,000	22.0%
1992	15,000	83,000	18.2%
1993	31,000	101,000	30.5%
1994	29,000	91,000	31.9%
1995	29,000	95,000	30.7%
1996	26,000	95,000	27.5%
1997	23,000	101,000	23.2%
1998	25,000	109,000	23.1%
1999	19,000	108,000	18.0%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.19: POVERTY TRENDS, COUPLES UNDER 65 WITHOUT CHILDREN, 1980-1999			
	Poor Couples Under 65 without Children	All Couples Under 65 without Children	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	93,000	1,388,000	6.7%
1981	103,000	1,402,000	7.3%
1982	129,000	1,455,000	8.9%
1983	135,000	1,405,000	9.6%
1984	147,000	1,484,000	9.9%
1985	132,000	1,548,000	8.5%
1986	141,000	1,566,000	9.0%
1987	149,000	1,648,000	9.0%
1988	133,000	1,672,000	7.9%
1989	125,000	1,726,000	7.3%
1990	139,000	1,731,000	8.1%
1991	157,000	1,731,000	9.1%
1992	156,000	1,806,000	8.6%
1993	170,000	1,777,000	9.6%
1994	178,000	1,883,000	9.4%
1995	190,000	1,891,000	10.1%
1996	177,000	1,844,000	9.6%
1997	164,000	1,852,000	8.9%
1998	155,000	1,863,000	8.3%
1999	165,000	1,909,000	8.6%

TABLE 1.20: POVERTY TRENDS, COUPLES 65 AND OVER, 1980-1999			
	Poor Couples 65 and Over	All Couples 65 and Over	Poverty Rate (%)
1980	97,000	553,000	17.5%
1981	106,000	556,000	19.1%
1982	76,000	599,000	12.7%
1983	84,000	599,000	14.1%
1984	95,000	622,000	15.3%
1985	97,000	643,000	15.1%
1986	100,000	700,000	14.3%
1987	92,000	704,000	13.0%
1988	90,000	737,000	12.2%
1989	72,000	748,000	9.6%
1990	58,000	778,000	7.5%
1991	66,000	793,000	8.3%
1992	65,000	842,000	7.8%
1993	73,000	831,000	8.7%
1994	51,000	878,000	5.8%
1995	62,000	925,000	6.7%
1996	66,000	866,000	7.6%
1997	69,000	869,000	7.9%
1998	62,000	888,000	7.0%
1999	44,000	924,000	4.7%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.21: POVERTY TRENDS FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65, 1980-1999									
	Poor Unattached Individuals Under 65	All Unattached Individuals Under 65	Poverty Rates (%)	Poor Unattached Women Under 65	All Unattached Women Under 65	Poverty Rates (%)	Poor Unattached Men Under 65	All Unattached Men Under 65	Poverty Rates (%)
1980	655,000	1,955,000	33.5%	356,000	884,000	40.3%	299,000	1,071,000	27.9%
1981	644,000	1,976,000	32.6%	351,000	901,000	38.9%	294,000	1,076,000	27.3%
1982	690,000	2,015,000	34.3%	330,000	896,000	36.8%	361,000	1,119,000	32.2%
1983	790,000	2,090,000	37.8%	367,000	902,000	40.7%	423,000	1,188,000	35.6%
1984	778,000	2,115,000	36.8%	383,000	922,000	41.6%	394,000	1,193,000	33.1%
1985	814,000	2,220,000	36.7%	392,000	938,000	41.7%	423,000	1,281,000	33.0%
1986	809,000	2,294,000	35.3%	389,000	988,000	39.4%	420,000	1,305,000	32.2%
1987	846,000	2,417,000	35.0%	396,000	1,037,000	38.1%	451,000	1,379,000	32.7%
1988	823,000	2,422,000	34.0%	416,000	1,046,000	39.8%	408,000	1,377,000	29.6%
1989	770,000	2,453,000	31.4%	393,000	1,064,000	36.9%	377,000	1,389,000	27.2%
1990	816,000	2,551,000	32.0%	391,000	1,070,000	36.5%	426,000	1,482,000	28.7%
1991	937,000	2,686,000	34.9%	451,000	1,149,000	39.3%	486,000	1,537,000	31.6%
1992	975,000	2,693,000	36.2%	439,000	1,094,000	40.1%	536,000	1,599,000	33.5%
1993	988,000	2,765,000	35.7%	441,000	1,114,000	39.6%	547,000	1,651,000	33.1%
1994	1,053,000	2,792,000	37.7%	505,000	1,136,000	44.5%	548,000	1,656,000	33.1%
1995	1,050,000	2,827,000	37.1%	480,000	1,188,000	40.4%	570,000	1,638,000	34.8%
1996	1,134,000	2,861,000	39.6%	515,000	1,179,000	43.6%	619,000	1,682,000	36.8%
1997	1,177,000	2,956,000	39.8%	556,000	1,235,000	45.1%	621,000	1,722,000	36.1%
1998	1,154,000	3,080,000	37.5%	565,000	1,296,000	43.6%	589,000	1,784,000	33.0%
1999	1,148,000	3,100,000	37.0%	548,000	1,295,000	42.3%	600,000	1,805,000	33.2%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 1.22: POVERTY TRENDS FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS 65 AND OVER, 1980-1999

	Poor Unattached Individuals 65 and Over	All Unattached Individuals 65 and Over	Poverty Rates (%)	Poor Unattached Women 65 and Over	All Unattached Women 65 and Over	Poverty Rates (%)	Poor Unattached Men 65 and Over	All Unattached Men 65 and Over	Poverty Rates (%)
1980	463,000	698,000	66.4%	354,000	506,000	70.1%	109,000	193,000	56.7%
1981	476,000	736,000	64.6%	367,000	539,000	68.1%	109,000	197,000	55.1%
1982	440,000	688,000	63.9%	354,000	518,000	68.3%	85,000	169,000	50.4%
1983	505,000	776,000	65.1%	401,000	585,000	68.5%	105,000	191,000	54.8%
1984	440,000	730,000	60.2%	349,000	557,000	62.6%	91,000	173,000	52.5%
1985	444,000	764,000	58.2%	359,000	585,000	61.4%	85,000	178,000	47.6%
1986	436,000	798,000	54.6%	350,000	610,000	57.5%	85,000	188,000	45.3%
1987	444,000	853,000	52.0%	363,000	648,000	56.1%	80,000	205,000	39.0%
1988	473,000	893,000	52.9%	396,000	684,000	57.9%	77,000	209,000	36.7%
1989	436,000	905,000	48.2%	362,000	687,000	52.7%	74,000	218,000	33.8%
1990	462,000	967,000	47.8%	370,000	730,000	50.6%	93,000	236,000	39.3%
1991	471,000	985,000	47.8%	376,000	740,000	50.8%	95,000	245,000	38.8%
1992	450,000	965,000	46.6%	369,000	726,000	50.8%	81,000	240,000	33.7%
1993	512,000	1,049,000	48.8%	414,000	778,000	53.2%	98,000	270,000	36.3%
1994	472,000	1,044,000	45.2%	394,000	782,000	50.4%	78,000	262,000	29.7%
1995	471,000	1,044,000	45.1%	396,000	782,000	50.6%	75,000	263,000	28.7%
1996	511,000	1,121,000	45.6%	412,000	829,000	49.8%	98,000	292,000	33.7%
1997	518,000	1,155,000	44.9%	418,000	841,000	49.7%	100,000	314,000	31.9%
1998	522,000	1,177,000	44.4%	409,000	853,000	47.9%	113,000	324,000	35.1%
1999	519,000	1,178,000	44.0%	417,000	861,000	48.5%	101,000	317,000	31.9%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

M121

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TABLE 1.23: PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES FOR ALL PERSONS, 1999					
	Number of Poor Individuals		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Individuals (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
All Persons	4,886,000	3,569,000	16.2%	11.8%	30,249,000
Children Under 18	1,313,000	975,000	18.7%	13.9%	7,028,000
Seniors	646,000	300,000	17.7%	8.2%	3,659,000
Unattached Individuals	1,667,000	1,280,000	38.9%	29.9%	4,279,000

TABLE 1.24: PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES FOR FAMILIES, 1999					
	Number of Poor Families		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Families (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
All Families	1,025,000	723,000	12.2%	8.6%	8,406,000
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	295,000	236,000	51.8%	41.3%	570,000
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	19,000	15,000	18.0%	13.5%	108,000
Couples Under 65 with Children	321,000	224,000	10.4%	7.3%	3,076,000
Couples Under 65 without Children	165,000	117,000	8.6%	6.1%	1,909,000
Couples 65 and Over	44,000	--	4.7%	1.0%	924,000

--Sample size too small

TABLE 1.25: PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS, 1999					
	Number of Poor Families		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Families (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
Unattached Individuals	1,667,000	1,280,000	38.9%	29.9%	4,279,000
Unattached Individuals Under 65	1,148,000	1,023,000	37.0%	33.0%	3,100,000
Unattached Women Under 65	548,000	490,000	42.3%	37.8%	1,295,000
Unattached Men Under 65	600,000	534,000	33.2%	29.6%	1,805,000
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over	519,000	256,000	44.0%	21.7%	1,178,000
Unattached Women 65 and Over	417,000	204,000	48.5%	23.6%	861,000
Unattached Men 65 and Over	101,000	53,000	31.9%	16.6%	317,000

TABLE 1.23: PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES FOR ALL PERSONS, 1999					
	Number of Poor Individuals		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Individuals (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
All Persons	4,886,000	3,569,000	16.2%	11.8%	30,249,000
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Unattached Individuals	1,667,000	1,280,000	38.9%	29.9%	4,279,000

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	Number of Poor Families		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Families (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
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Couples 65 and Over	44,000	--	4.7%	1.0%	924,000

--Sample size too small

TABLE 1.25: PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS, 1999					
	Number of Poor Families		Poverty Rate (%)		Total Number of Families (Poor and Non-Poor)
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	
Unattached Individuals	1,667,000	1,280,000	38.9%	29.9%	4,279,000
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Unattached Men Under 65	600,000	534,000	33.2%	29.6%	1,805,000
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Unattached Men 65 and Over	101,000	53,000	31.9%	16.6%	317,000

II. VIEW FROM THE PROVINCES

Economic conditions, the adequacy of pension programs, and family type are major determinants of poverty in all parts of Canada. There are important differences from province to province, however, depending on factors such as economic structures, welfare benefits and access to other social and economic resources that enable people to improve their economic situation.

The diversity in provincial political economies is often reflected, in part if not whole, in disparities in poverty levels across provinces. In this chapter, we compare the ten Canadian provinces on their pre-tax poverty rates from 1980 to 1999, for all persons as well as for families and unattached individuals. We also provide pre-tax and post-tax poverty rates for 1999[1].

ALL PERSONS

Between 1998 and 1999, the poverty rate for all persons decreased in seven provinces. The poverty rate among the general population dropped in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The poverty rate for all persons increased in British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Quebec's poverty rate for all persons dropped from 22.1 percent in 1998 to 19.5 percent in 1999. Among all the provinces, this was the largest decrease in the pre-tax poverty rate for all individuals. Comparatively, Manitoba also had a sizeable dip from 20 percent in 1998 to 18.5 percent in 1999.

Of the remaining provinces whose pre-tax poverty rates fell, the improvement ranged from 0.9 percentage points in Saskatchewan, to 0.4 percentage points in Nova Scotia. In contrast, the poverty rate for all persons rose by 2.4 percentage points in British Columbia, by 2 percentage points in Prince Edward Island and by 0.7 percentage points in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1999, the poverty rate for all persons ranged from a low of 13.5 percent in Ontario to a high of 20.7 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador. Table 2.24 provides the 1999 poverty rates by province, for families, unattached individuals and all persons.

The lowest provincial rate for all persons was recorded in 1989 at 10.8 percent in Ontario. The highest rate was recorded in 1983 in Newfoundland and Labrador at 26 percent.

From 1980 through 1999, the provincial poverty rate for all persons was consistently above the national rate in the cases of Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Manitoba. Ontario was the only province whose poverty rate for all persons was consistently below the national rate from 1980 to 1999. Prince Edward Island came close. From 1983 to 1999 its

[1] Until 1999, the National Council of Welfare had requested, obtained and analyzed only pre-tax poverty statistics from Statistics Canada. We have both pre-tax and post-tax data only for 1999.

poverty rate was consistently below the national rate. Although the poverty rate for all persons in Nova Scotia fluctuated frequently between 1980 and 1999, it generally was close to the national rate.

Province-by-province poverty rates for the 1980-1999 period are provided in the pages that follow in Figures 2.1 through 2.20. The top half of each page shows provincial poverty rates for all persons from 1980 to 1999. The line with diamond markers and accompanied by percentages shows the provincial poverty rates. For purposes of comparison, each graph includes a second line showing the poverty rates for Canada.

The bottom half of each page gives the poverty rates for families and unattached individuals from 1980 through 1999. The lines without markers or percentages show the national trends. Additional information can be found in Tables 2.25 to 2.27.

Figure 2.1: Poverty Rates in Newfoundland and Labrador, Trends for All Persons

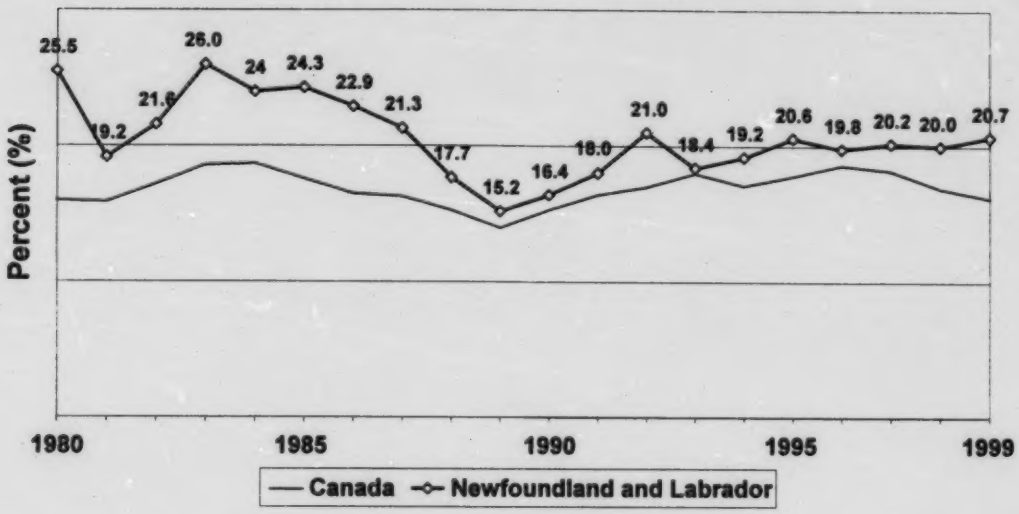


Figure 2.2: Poverty Rates in Newfoundland and Labrador, Families and Unattached Individuals

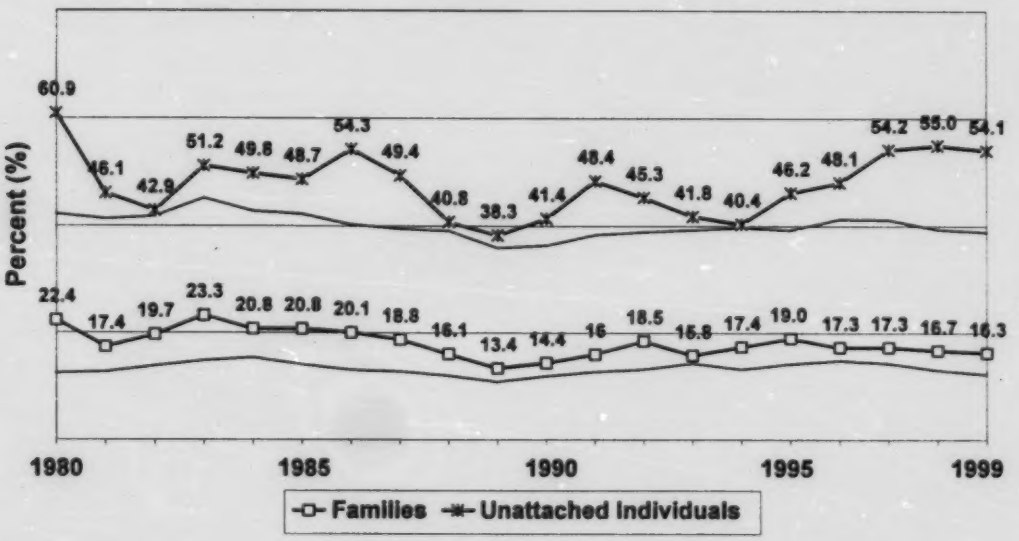


Figure 2.3: Poverty Rates in Prince Edward Island, Trends for All Persons

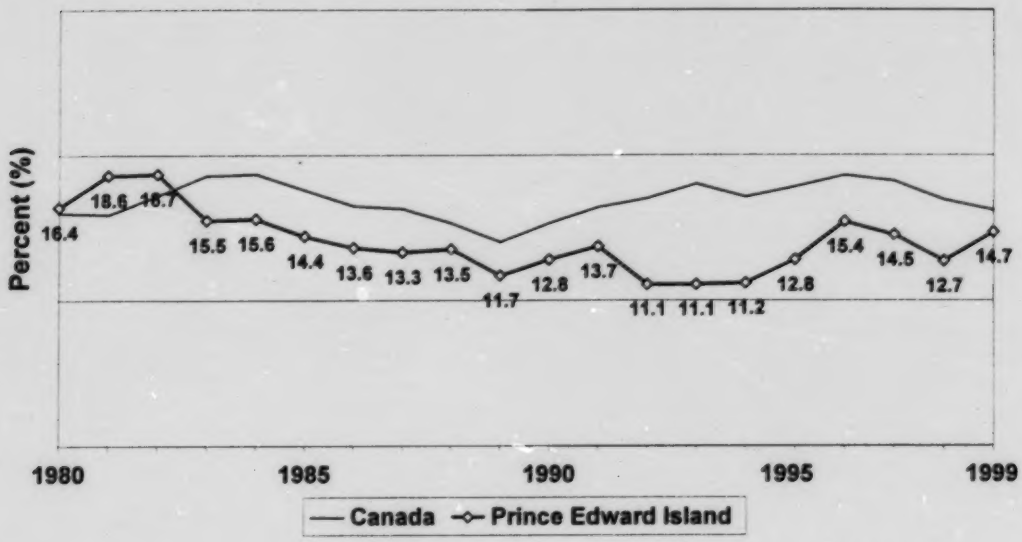


Figure 2.4: Poverty Rates in Prince Edward Island, Families and Unattached Individuals

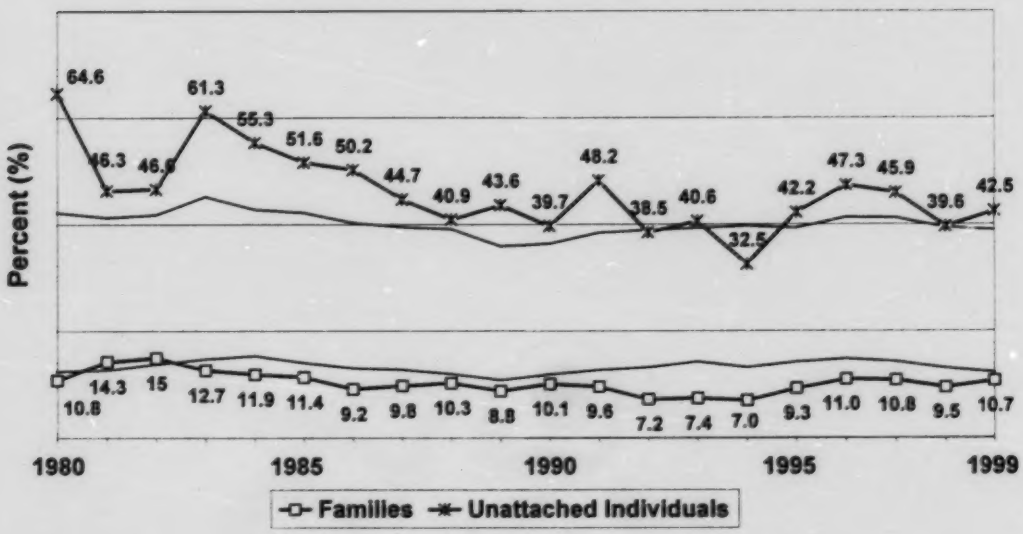


Figure 2.5: Poverty Rates in Nova Scotia, Trends for All Persons

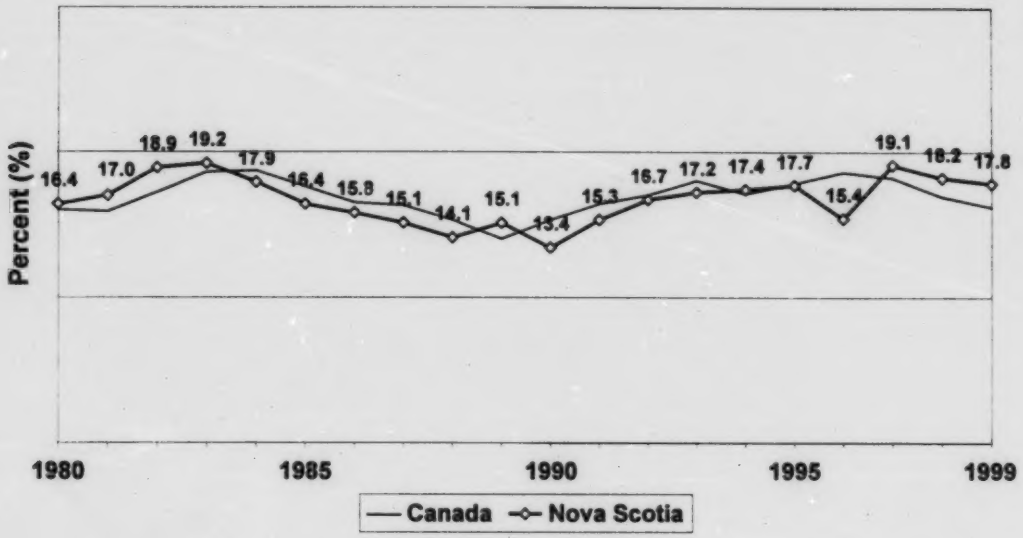


Figure 2.6: Poverty Rates in Nova Scotia, Families and Unattached Individuals

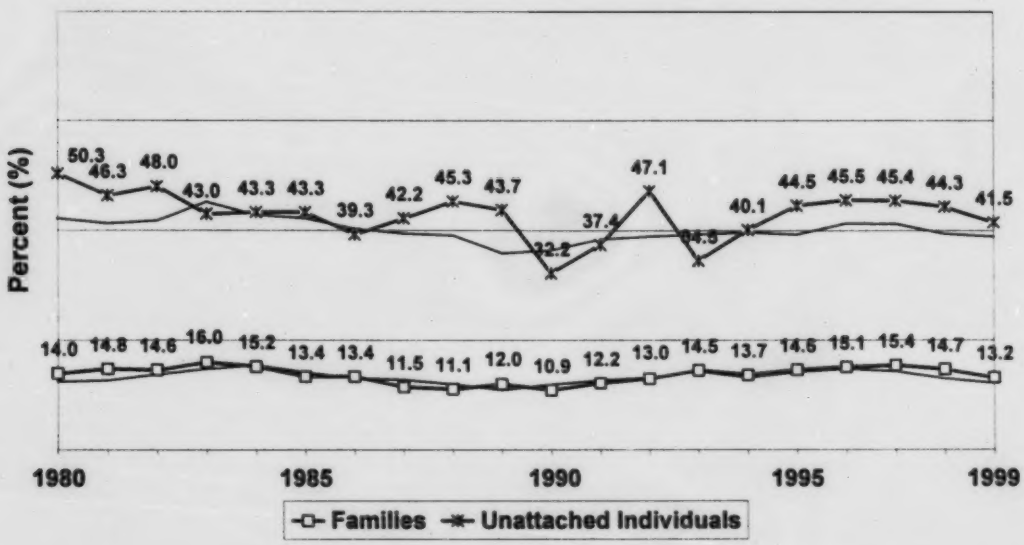


Figure 2.7: Poverty Rates in New Brunswick, Trends for All Persons

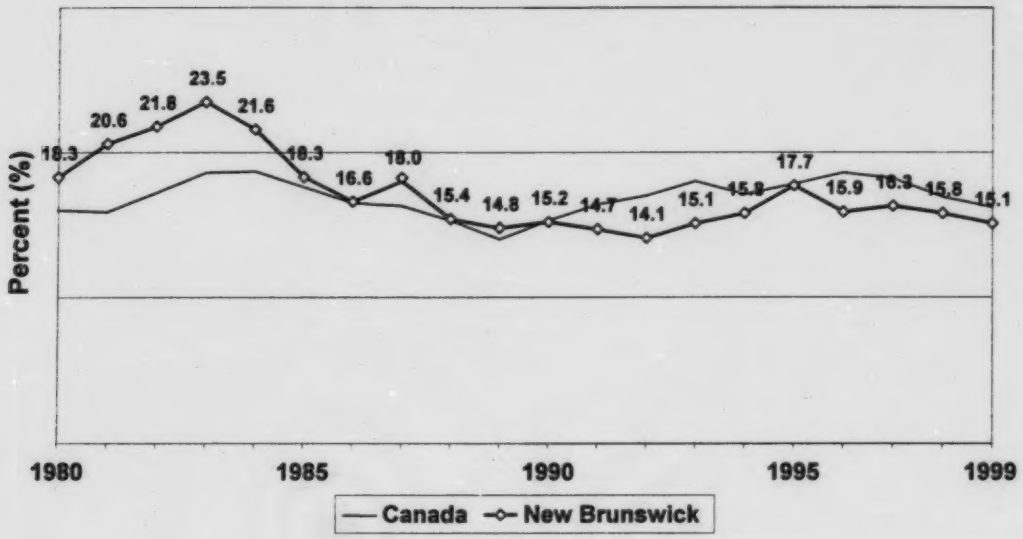


Figure 2.8: Poverty Rates in New Brunswick, Families and Unattached Individuals

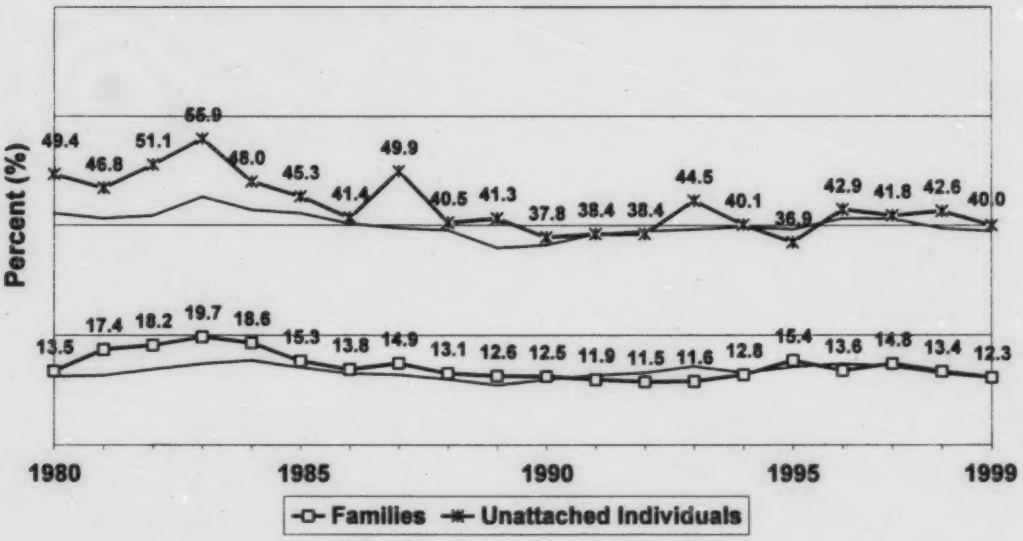


Figure 2.9: Poverty Rates in Quebec, Trends for All Persons

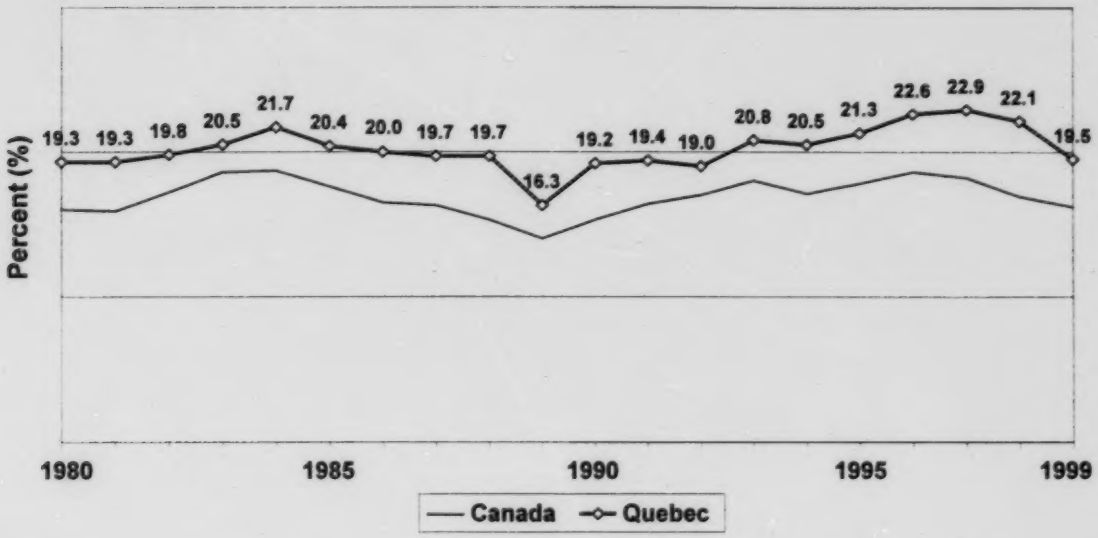


Figure 2.10: Poverty Rates in Quebec, Families and Unattached Individuals

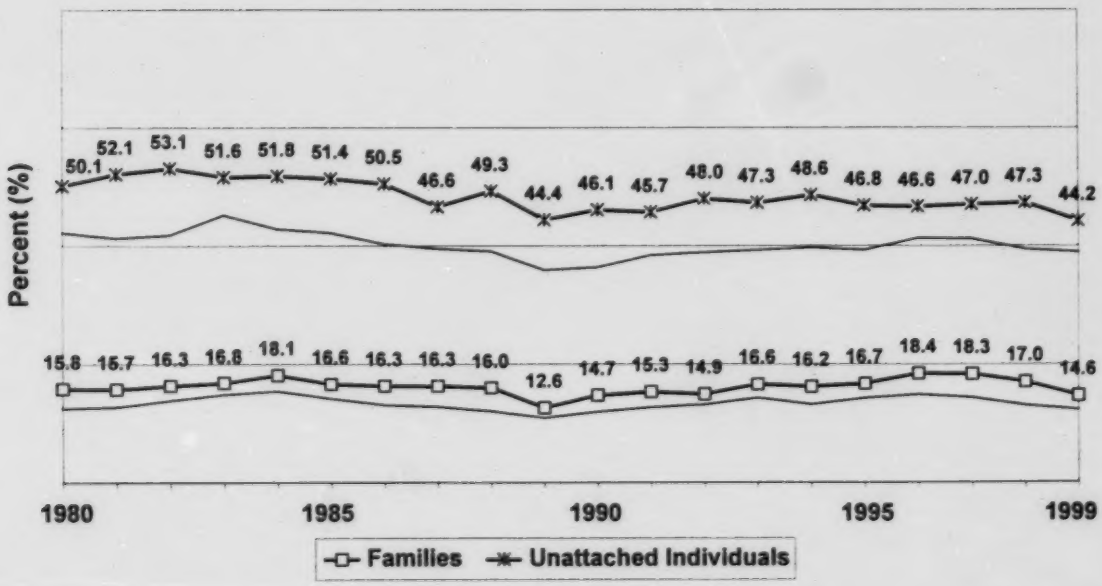


Figure 2.11: Poverty Rates in Ontario, Trends for All Persons

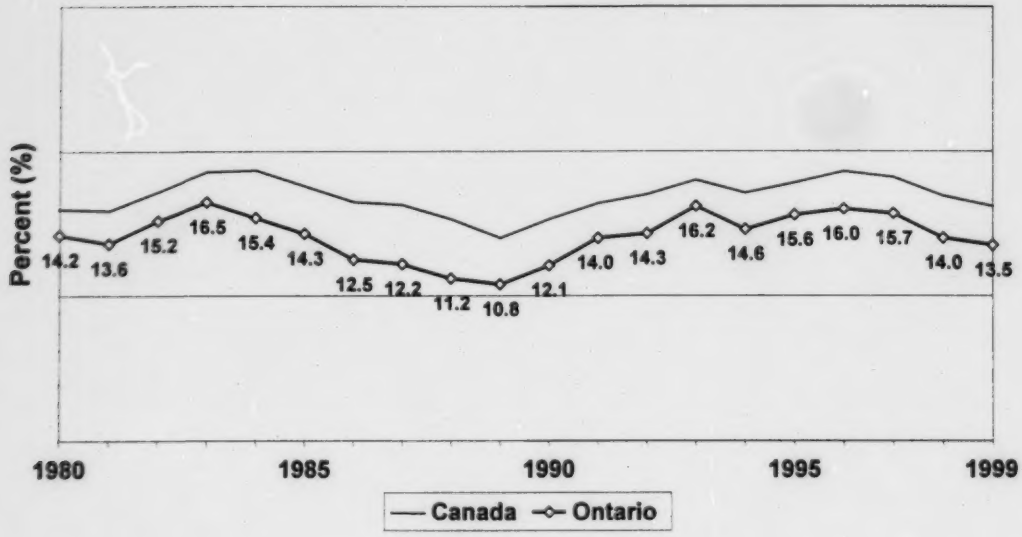


Figure 2.12: Poverty Rates in Ontario, Families and Unattached Individuals

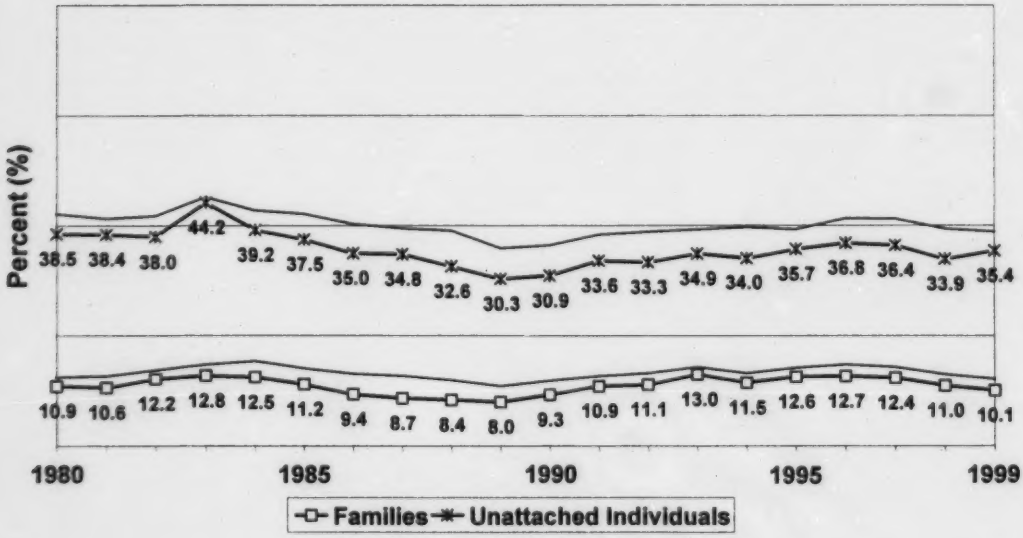


Figure 2.13: Poverty Rates in Manitoba, Trends for All Persons

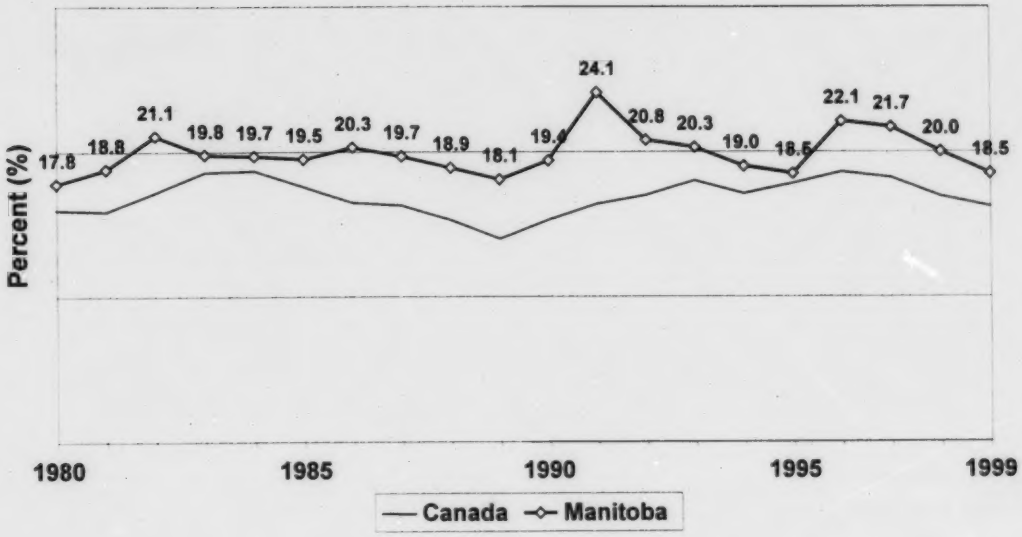


Figure 2.14: Poverty Rates in Manitoba, Families and Unattached Individuals

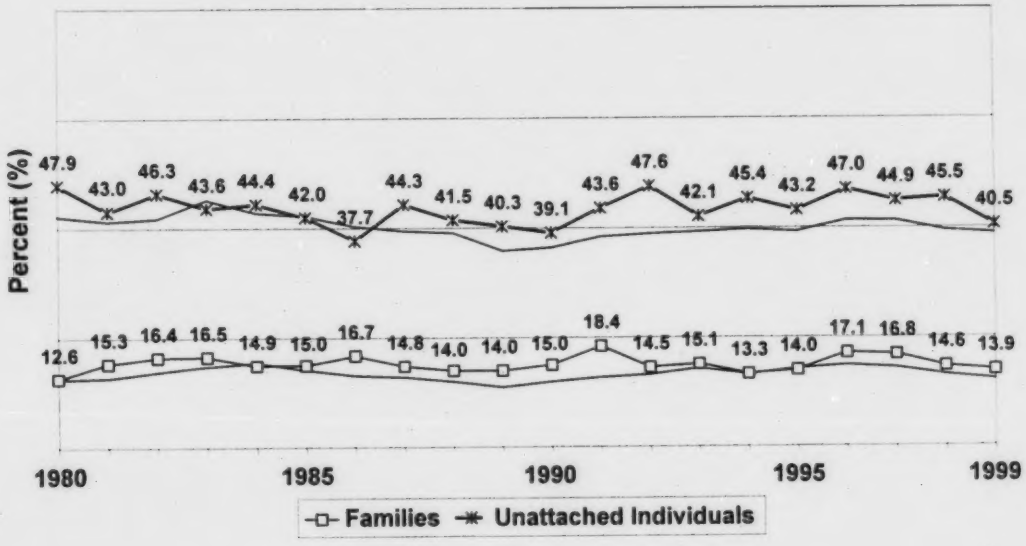


Figure 2.15: Poverty Rates in Saskatchewan, Trends for All Persons

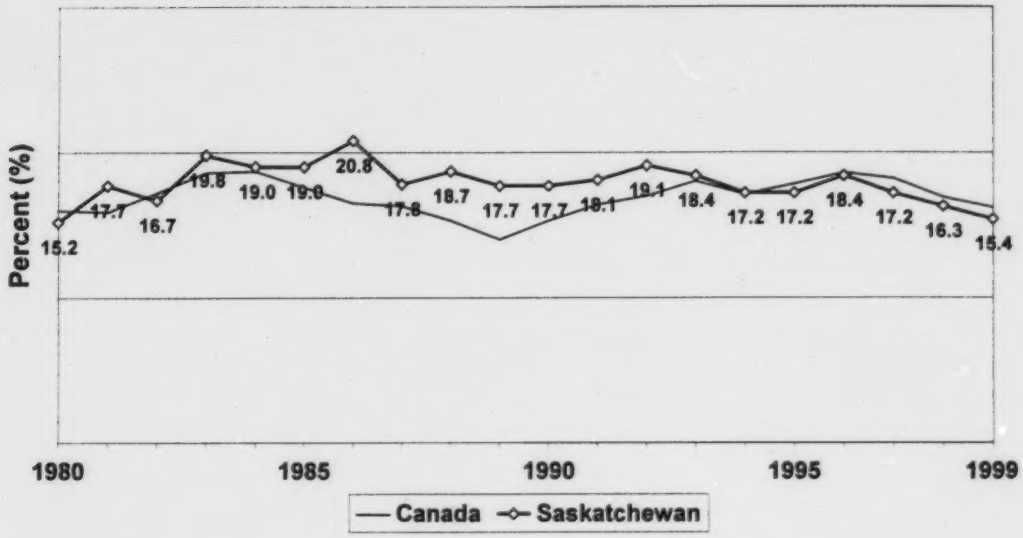


Figure 2.16: Poverty Rates in Saskatchewan, Families and Unattached Individuals

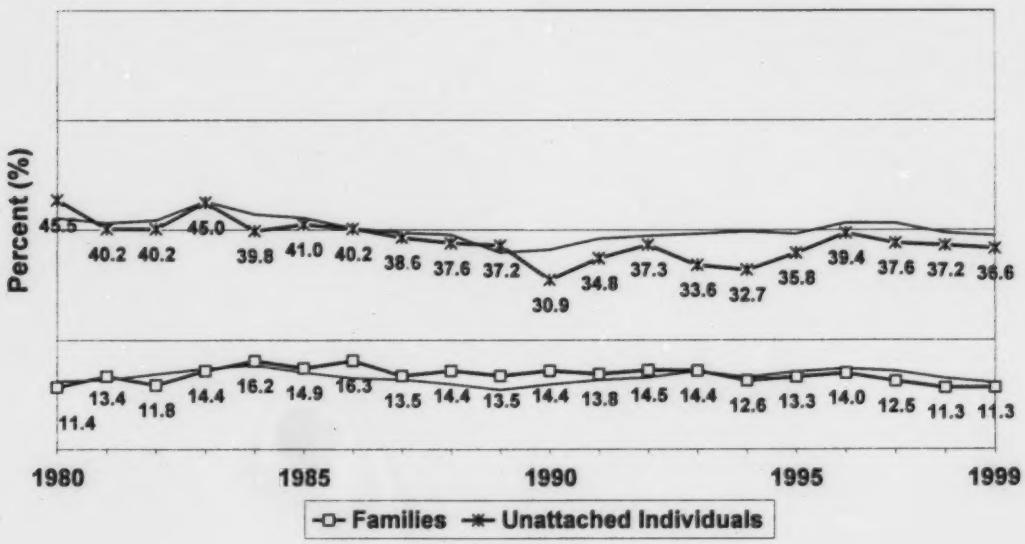


Figure 2.17: Poverty Rates in Alberta, Trends for All Persons

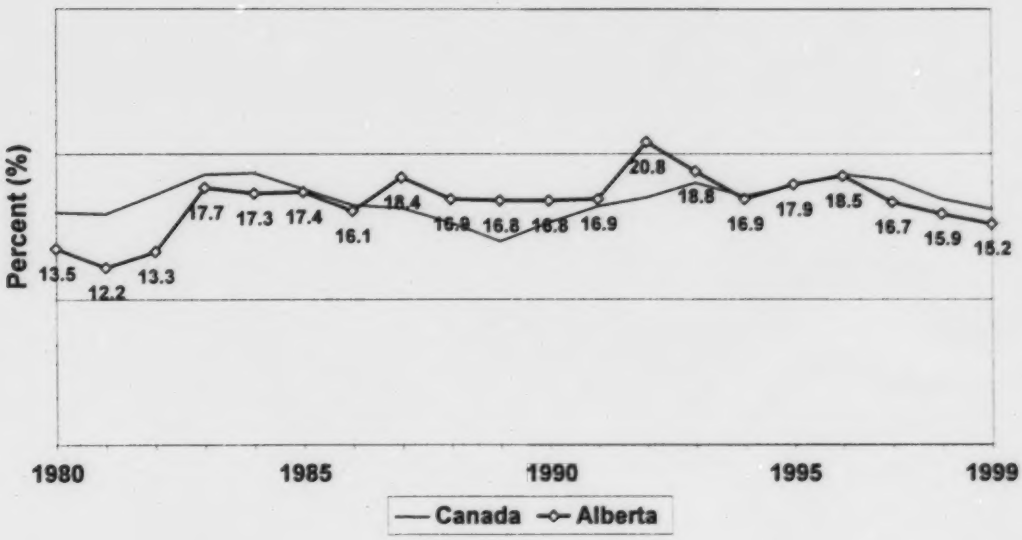


Figure 2.18: Poverty Rates in Alberta, Families and Unattached Individuals

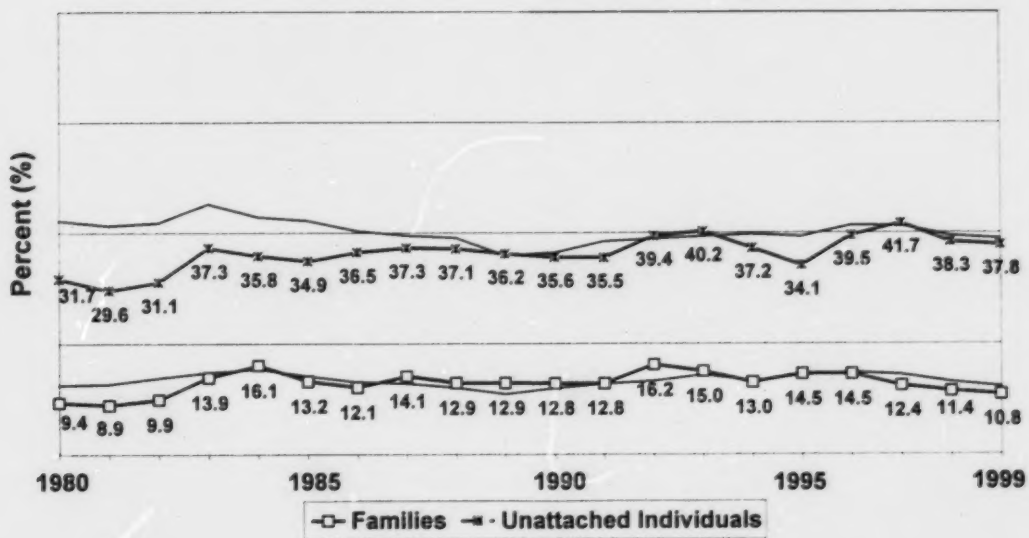


Figure 2.19: Poverty Rates in British Columbia, Trends for All Persons

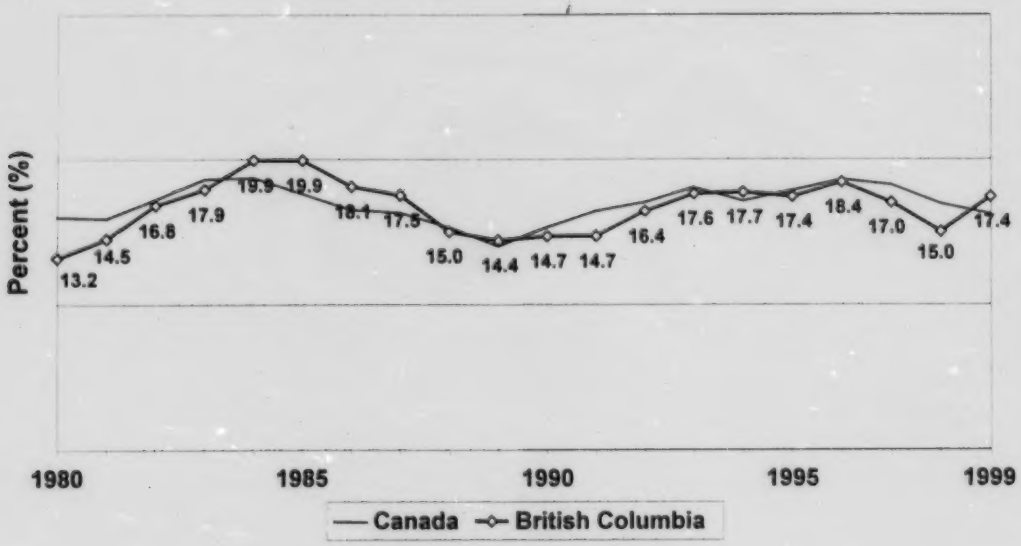
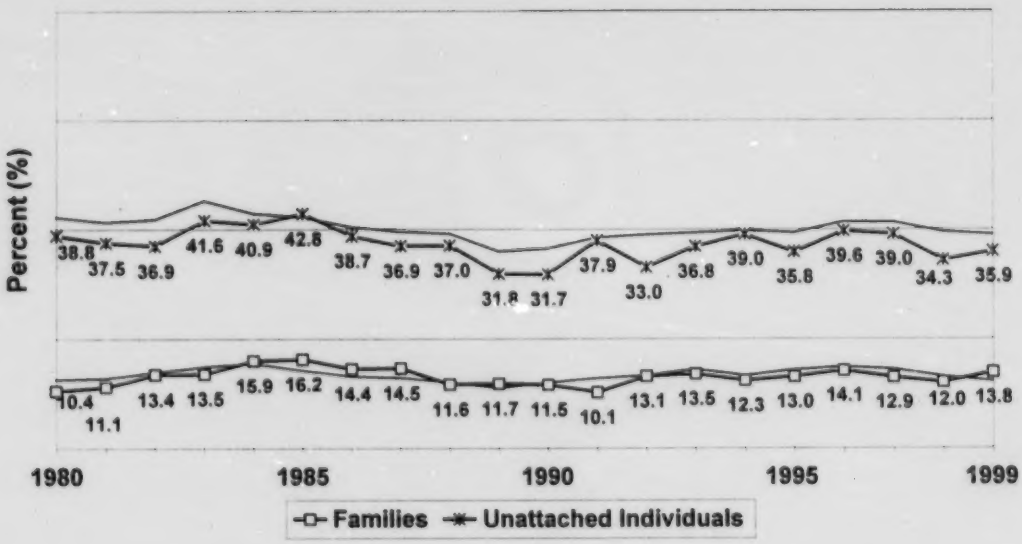


Figure 2.20: Poverty Rates in British Columbia, Families and Unattached Individuals



FAMILIES

Between 1998 and 1999, in Saskatchewan, the poverty rate for families remained unchanged at 11.3 percent. However, with the exception of British Columbia and Prince Edward Island where the poverty rates for families rose by 1.8 percentage points and by 1.2 percentage points respectively, the poverty rates for families dropped in all the other provinces. The largest drop was in Quebec where the poverty rate improved by 2.4 percentage points from 17 percent in 1998 to 14.6 percent in 1999. In the remaining provinces, the improvement ranged from 1.5 percentage points in Nova Scotia to 0.4 percentage points in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1999, family poverty rates were lower in Ontario (10.1 percent), Prince Edward Island (10.7 percent), Alberta (10.8 percent) and Saskatchewan (11.3 percent) than at the national level (12.2 percent). Nova Scotia (13.2 percent), British Columbia (13.8 percent), Manitoba (13.9 percent) and Quebec (14.6 percent) had rates that were slightly higher than the national rate. The rate in Newfoundland and Labrador (16.3 percent) was higher than the national rate. New Brunswick's rate of 12.3 percent approximated the national rate.

Since 1980, the provincial rate for families has been consistently above the national rate in Quebec, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador. In Ontario and Prince Edward Island, the provincial rate for families has been generally lower than the national average from the period 1980 to 1999. For Prince Edward Island, the only exception was the period from 1981 to 1982 when the provincial rate was higher. The family rate in the five other provinces has fluctuated considerably with different patterns over the years.

UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

Between 1998 and 1999, as with all persons, the poverty rates for unattached individuals rose in some provinces and dropped in others. The most dramatic drop was in Manitoba where the proportion of poor unattached individuals decreased from 45.5 percent in 1998 to 40.5 percent in 1999. Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and Alberta saw modest improvements of 3.1 percent, 2.6 percent, 0.9 percent, 0.6 percent and 0.5 percent respectively. However, the poverty rate rose by 2.9 percentage points in Prince Edward Island, by 1.6 percentage points in British Columbia and by 1.5 percentage points in Ontario.

In 1999, the pre-tax poverty rate was highest in Newfoundland and Labrador at 54 percent. It was lowest in Ontario at 35 percent.

From 1980 through 1999, the provincial rates in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec were higher than the national poverty rate for unattached individuals. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the poverty rate for unattached persons ranged from a high of 60.9 percent in 1980 to a low of 38.3 percent in 1989. The gap between the national and the Newfoundland and Labrador poverty rates was closest in 1982 (when the provincial rate was 42.9 percent), between 1988 and 1990 (when the provincial rate ranged from 38.3 percent to 41.4 percent),

and in 1993 and 1994 (when the provincial rates were 41.8 percent and 40.4 percent respectively).

However, between 1995 and 1999, the gap between the national rate and the provincial poverty rate for unattached persons widened considerably in Newfoundland and Labrador. The gap reached a high of 15.6 percentage points in 1998 when the provincial rate was 55 percent and the national rate was 39.4 percent. The gap narrowed to 15.2 percentage points in 1999 when the provincial and national rates decreased to 54.1 percent and 38.9 percent respectively.

In contrast, from 1980 to 1999, the poverty rates for unattached individuals in Ontario and British Columbia were, for the most part, lower than the national rate. The poverty rate for unattached individuals in Ontario ranged from a low of 30.3 percent in 1989 to a high of 44.2 percent in 1983; in British Columbia ranged from a low of 31.7 percent in 1990 to a high of 42.8 percent in 1985; the national level rate ranged from a low of 35.9 percent in 1989 to a high of 42.8 percent in 1984.

In Prince Edward Island, the provincial rate was generally higher than the national rate from 1980 through 1991. Between 1992 and 1993, the provincial rate in Prince Edward Island was close to the national rate. However, in 1994, the PEI rate fell to 32.5 percent below the national rate of 39.7 percent. Since 1995 however, the poverty rate for unattached individuals has been consistently above the national rate. Similarly, for Nova Scotia, the provincial rate has been mostly above the national rate with the exceptions of 1983, 1986, 1990 and 1993 when the provincial poverty rate was either below or close to the national rate for unattached persons.

The trends in New Brunswick and Manitoba were similar to that of Nova Scotia: poverty rates in both New Brunswick and Manitoba were generally above the national rate for the greater part of the last two decades. For New Brunswick, the notable exceptions were 1990 through 1992 when the provincial rate closely approximated the national rate, 1994 when the two rates were again virtually the same and 1995, when the provincial rate was lower than the national rate. However, although the provincial rate has been higher than the national rate from 1996 to 1999, the gap between the two was quite narrow for the latter period. In the case of Manitoba, the provincial rate was either close to or below the national rate from 1983 to 1986.

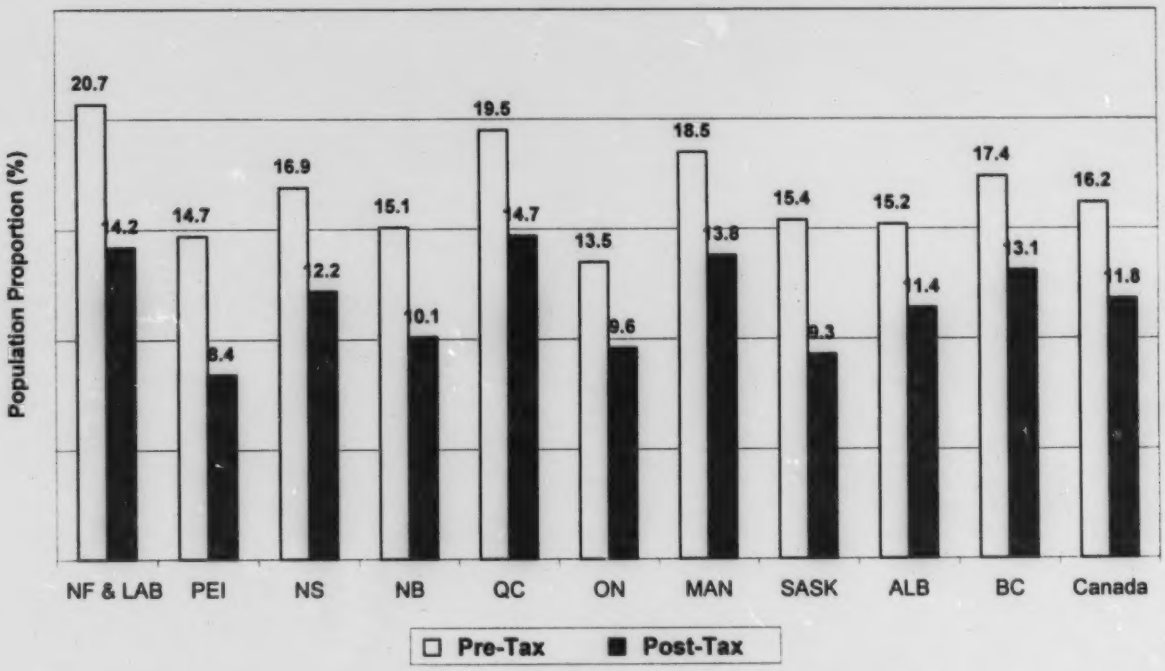
In the case of Saskatchewan, the provincial rate and the national rate were virtually the same from 1981 through 1989. However, since 1990, the provincial rate in Saskatchewan for unattached persons has been generally below the national rate.

In Alberta, the provincial rate was generally below the national rate from 1980 through 1988. Between 1989 and 1990, the two rates were virtually the same. Since then, the provincial rate has been either below or close to the national rate.

1999 PRE-TAX AND POST-TAX POVERTY RATES

As at the national level, the post-tax poverty rates in all the provinces were generally lower than the pre-tax poverty rates for all persons, families and unattached individuals. However, the post-tax reduction in poverty rates varied from one province to another. Provinces such as Prince Edward Island, in addition to having relatively low pre-tax poverty rates, also had a substantial reduction in poverty rates after accounting for taxes. Accordingly, they also ended up with relatively low post-tax poverty rates as well. Other provinces such as Ontario and Alberta had relatively low pre-tax rates but only slight decreases after taxes were factored in. Consequently, their post-tax poverty rates tended to be more modest. Some provinces such as Quebec and New Brunswick started out with high pre-tax poverty rates and had modest post-tax reductions. Their post-tax poverty rates tended to be mid-range.

Figure 2.21: Poverty Rates for All Persons by Province (Pre- and Post-Tax Rates), 1999

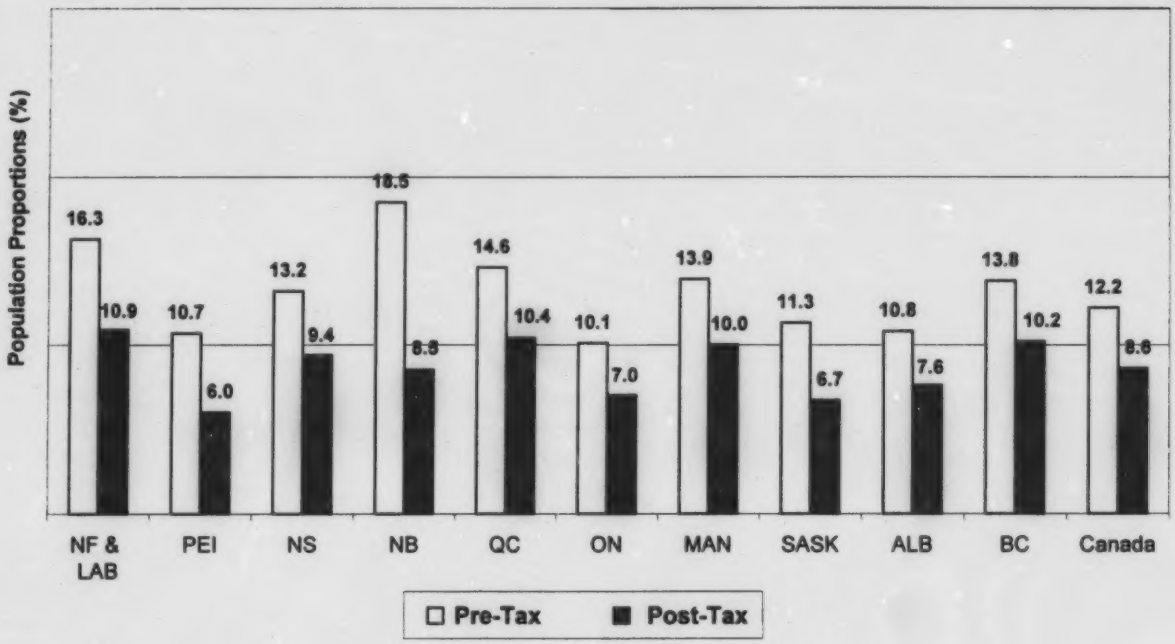


ALL PERSONS

The poverty rates for all individuals were higher than the rates for families but lower than the rates for unattached individuals. Newfoundland and Labrador (20.7 percent), Quebec (19.5 percent), Manitoba (18.5 percent), British Columbia (17.4 percent) and Nova Scotia (16.9 percent) had the highest pre-tax poverty rates. Ontario (13.5 percent), Prince Edward

Island (14.7 percent), New Brunswick (15.1 percent), Alberta (15.2 percent) and Saskatchewan (15.4 percent) had lower rates than the national level.

Figure 2.22: Poverty Rates for Families by Province (Pre- and Post-Tax Rates), 1999



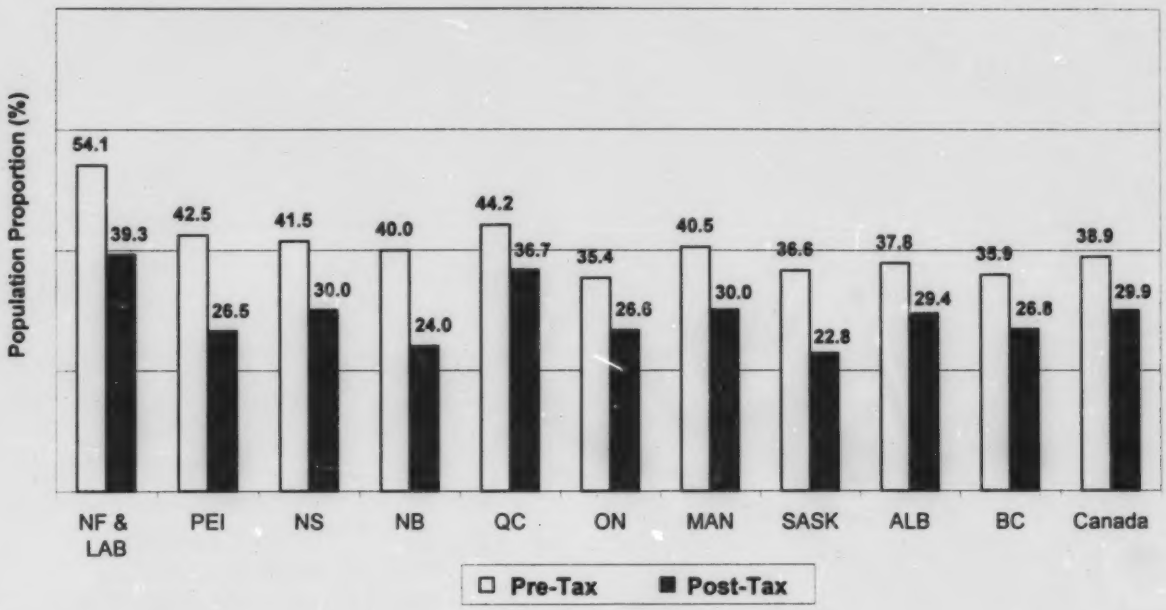
FAMILIES

After taxes, Prince Edward Island had the lowest poverty rate of 6 percent. New Brunswick had the largest percentage reduction of 10 percentage points in its poverty rate after accounting for taxes, putting its post-tax poverty level (8.5 percent) on more or less the same footing as the national level (8.6 percent). After taxes, Newfoundland and Labrador saw the second largest decrease (5.4 percentage points) in poverty rate. Prince Edward had the third largest at 4.7 percent. This, combined with having the second lowest pre-tax poverty rate, made Prince Edward Island the province with the lowest 1999 post-tax poverty rate for families.

The post-tax reductions in poverty levels in Ontario (3.1 percentage points) and Alberta (3.2 percentage points) fell below the reduction at the national level (3.6 percentage points). Nonetheless, after taxes, both Ontario at 7 percent and Alberta at 7.6 percent had poverty rates that were slightly lower than the national level of 8.6 percent. After modest post-tax

reductions in poverty rates, Manitoba, British Columbia and Quebec, still had post-tax poverty rates that were higher than the national rate of 8.6 percent.

Figure 2.23: Poverty Rates for Unattached Individuals by Province (Pre- and Post-Tax Rates), 1999



UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

In Chapter 1, we showed that poverty rates at the national level are generally lower for families than for either all persons or unattached individuals. This is also the case across all the ten provinces.

After taxes, the poverty rates for unattached individuals were reduced by a high of 16 percentage points to 26.5 percent in Prince Edward Island and 24 in New Brunswick. The reduction meant that the two provinces had post-tax poverty rates that were lower than the national level of 29.9 percent for unattached individuals.

Saskatchewan saw a modest reduction of 13.8 percentage points in its pre-tax poverty rate for unattached individuals. It also had the lowest post-tax poverty rate of 22.8 percent across the entire country for unattached individuals. Ontario and Alberta had post-tax poverty rates lower than the national rate even though they saw only modest post-tax reductions of 8.8 percentage points and 8.4 percentage points respectively.

POVERTY RATES RELATIVE TO PROVINCIAL POPULATIONS

In 1999, there were about 8.4 million families in Canada. Of these, slightly over one million were poor before taxes and about 0.7 million were poor after taxes.

In 1999, Statistics Canada estimated Ontario's share of all Canadian families at 37.9 percent. Quebec's share was 24.7 percent. These two large provinces jointly accounted for over 60 percent of poor Canadian families in 1999.

Despite having the lowest pre-tax poverty rates for families and all individuals, Ontario accounted for 32.4 percent of all poor Canadian families and for 32.1 percent of all poor Canadians in 1999. However, at 31.3 percent, Quebec had the largest proportion of unattached individuals whose income before taxes was below the pre-tax poverty line. Ontario had the second largest share of poor unattached persons at about 30.7 percent.

After taxes, Ontario's share of poor Canadian families was 31 percent. Quebec's had a post-tax share of 29.9 percent.

TABLE 2.24: POVERTY BY PROVINCE, 1999

	Families				Unattached Individuals				All Persons			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number of Poor Families	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Families	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Unattached Individuals	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Unattached Individuals	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Persons	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Persons	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	26,000	16.3%	17,000	10.9%	30,000	54.1%	22,000	39.3%	112,000	20.7%	77,000	14.2%
Prince Edward Island	4,000	10.7%	2,000	6.0%	7,000	42.5%	5,000	26.5%	20,000	14.7%	11,000	8.4%
Nova Scotia	35,000	13.2%	24,000	9.4%	55,000	41.5%	40,000	30.0%	157,000	16.9%	113,000	12.2%
New Brunswick	27,000	18.5%	19,000	8.5%	35,000	40%	21,000	24.0%	112,000	15.1%	76,000	10.1%
Quebec	302,000	14.6%	216,000	10.4%	522,000	44.2%	433,000	36.7%	1,433,000	19.5%	1,084,000	14.7%
Ontario	322,000	10.1%	224,000	7.0%	512,000	35.4%	384,000	26.6%	1,568,000	13.5%	1,119,000	9.6%
Manitoba	42,000	13.9%	30,000	10.0%	65,000	40.5%	48,000	30.0%	202,000	18.5%	151,000	13.8%
Saskatchewan	30,000	11.3%	18,000	6.7%	56,000	36.6%	35,000	22.8%	150,000	15.4%	91,000	9.3%
Alberta	86,000	10.8%	61,000	7.6%	165,000	37.8%	128,000	29.4%	445,000	15.2%	334,000	11.4%
British Columbia	150,000	13.8%	110,000	10.2%	219,000	35.9%	163,000	26.8%	686,000	17.4%	513,000	13.1%
Canada	1,025,000	12.2%	723,000	8.6%	1,667,000	38.9%	1,280,000	29.9%	4,886,000	16.2%	3,569,000	11.8%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 2.24: POVERTY BY PROVINCE, 1999

	Families				Unattached Individuals				All Persons			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number of Poor Families	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Families	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Unattached Individuals	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Unattached Individuals	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Persons	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor Persons	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	26,000	16.3%	17,000	10.9%	30,000	54.1%	22,000	39.3%	112,000	20.7%	77,000	14.2%
Prince Edward Island	4,000	10.7%	2,000	6.0%	7,000	42.5%	5,000	26.5%	20,000	14.7%	11,000	8.4%
Nova Scotia	35,000	13.2%	24,000	9.4%	55,000	41.5%	40,000	30.0%	157,000	16.9%	113,000	12.2%
New Brunswick	27,000	18.5%	19,000	8.5%	35,000	40%	21,000	24.0%	112,000	15.1%	76,000	10.1%
Quebec	302,000	14.6%	216,000	10.4%	522,000	44.2%	433,000	36.7%	1,433,000	19.5%	1,084,000	14.7%
Ontario	322,000	10.1%	224,000	7.0%	512,000	35.4%	384,000	26.6%	1,568,000	13.5%	1,119,000	9.6%
Manitoba	42,000	13.9%	30,000	10.0%	65,000	40.5%	48,000	30.0%	202,000	18.5%	151,000	13.8%
Saskatchewan	30,000	11.3%	18,000	6.7%	56,000	36.6%	35,000	22.8%	150,000	15.4%	91,000	9.3%
Alberta	86,000	10.8%	61,000	7.6%	165,000	37.8%	128,000	29.4%	445,000	15.2%	334,000	11.4%
British Columbia	150,000	13.8%	110,000	10.2%	219,000	35.9%	163,000	26.8%	686,000	17.4%	513,000	13.1%
Canada	1,025,000	12.2%	723,000	8.6%	1,667,000	38.9%	1,280,000	29.9%	4,886,000	16.2%	3,569,000	11.8%

Using 1992 base pre-tax low income cut-offs.

TABLE 2.25: POVERTY RATES FOR FAMILIES UNDER 65, BY PROVINCE, 1999*												
PROVINCE	Single-Parent Mothers				Couples with Children				Couples without Children			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,000	66%	5,000	51%	9,000	16%	7,000	11%	4,000	12%	3,000	8%
Prince Edward Island	--	--	--	--	2,000	11%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nova Scotia	9,000	56%	7,000	44%	8,000	8%	5,000	6%	7,000	11%	5,000	8%
New Brunswick	10,000	63%	8,000	47%	7,000	9%	5,000	7%	4,000	8%	3,000	5%
Quebec	87,000	57%	72,000	48%	91,000	13%	64,000	9%	53,000	11%	38,000	8%
Ontario	92,000	47%	75,000	38%	112,000	9%	72,000	6%	43,000	6%	32,000	5%
Manitoba	14,000	65%	11,000	49%	14,000	12%	10,000	9%	6,000	8%	5,000	8%
Saskatchewan	12,000	46%	7,000	30%	8,000	8%	5,000	5%	5,000	9%	3,000	5%
Alberta	24,000	46%	17,000	34%	30,000	9%	23,000	7%	17,000	9%	10,000	5%
British Columbia	40,000	52%	32,000	41%	42,000	11%	32,000	8%	25,000	9%	19,000	7%
Canada	295,000	52%	236,000	41%	321,000	10%	224,000	7%	165,000	9%	117,000	6%

*Annually, the National Council of Welfare receives multiple requests for a breakdown in national poverty rates by province and even municipalities. We have provided such information as is statistically reliable. Note as well that there is no provincial table for senior couples as the numbers of these couples are too small to be reliable.

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 2.26: POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65, BY PROVINCE, 1999

PROVINCE	Unattached Individuals				Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	21,000	56%	19,000	49%	10,000	62%	9,000	54%	11,000	51%	10,000	42%
Prince Edward Island	5,000	43%	4,000	35%	3,000	52%	2,000	42%	3,000	37%	2,000	30%
Nova Scotia	39,000	42%	34,000	37%	20,000	50%	18,000	44%	18,000	35%	16,000	31%
New Brunswick	22,000	39%	18,000	31%	8,000	39%	6,000	30%	14,000	38%	12,000	32%
Quebec	348,000	40%	328,000	37%	174,000	46%	166,000	44%	174,000	34%	162,000	32%
Ontario	353,000	34%	305,000	30%	164,000	37%	143,000	32%	189,000	33%	162,000	28%
Manitoba	40,000	39%	38,000	36%	17,000	42%	15,000	37%	23,000	37%	23,000	36%
Saskatchewan	36,000	36%	31,000	32%	15,000	42%	13,000	36%	21,000	33%	18,000	29%
Alberta	132,000	38%	114,000	33%	66,000	47%	56,000	40%	66,000	32%	58,000	28%
British Columbia	151,000	34%	131,000	30%	69,000	42%	61,000	37%	82,000	30%	71,000	26%
Canada	1,148,000	37%	1,023,000	33%	548,000	42%	490,000	38%	600,000	33%	534,000	30%

TABLE 2.25: POVERTY RATES FOR FAMILIES UNDER 65, BY PROVINCE, 1999*

PROVINCE	Single-Parent Mothers				Couples with Children				Couples without Children			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,000	66%	5,000	51%	9,000	16%	7,000	11%	4,000	12%	3,000	8%
Prince Edward Island	--	--	--	--	2,000	11%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nova Scotia	9,000	56%	7,000	44%	8,000	8%	5,000	6%	7,000	11%	5,000	8%
New Brunswick	10,000	63%	8,000	47%	7,000	9%	5,000	7%	4,000	8%	3,000	5%
Quebec	87,000	57%	72,000	48%	91,000	13%	64,000	9%	53,000	11%	38,000	8%
Ontario	92,000	47%	75,000	38%	112,000	9%	72,000	6%	43,000	6%	32,000	5%
Manitoba	14,000	65%	11,000	49%	14,000	12%	10,000	9%	6,000	8%	5,000	8%
Saskatchewan	12,000	46%	7,000	30%	8,000	8%	5,000	5%	5,000	9%	3,000	5%
Alberta	24,000	46%	17,000	34%	30,000	9%	23,000	7%	17,000	9%	10,000	5%
British Columbia	40,000	52%	32,000	41%	42,000	11%	32,000	8%	25,000	9%	19,000	7%
Canada	295,000	52%	236,000	41%	321,000	10%	224,000	7%	165,000	9%	117,000	6%

*Annually, the National Council of Welfare receives multiple requests for a breakdown in national poverty rates by province and even municipalities. We have provided such information as is statistically reliable. Note as well that there is no provincial table for senior couples as the numbers of these couples are too small to be reliable.

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 2.26: POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65, BY PROVINCE, 1999

PROVINCE	Unattached Individuals				Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	21,000	56%	19,000	49%	10,000	62%	9,000	54%	11,000	51%	10,000	42%
Prince Edward Island	5,000	43%	4,000	35%	3,000	52%	2,000	42%	3,000	37%	2,000	30%
Nova Scotia	39,000	42%	34,000	37%	20,000	50%	18,000	44%	18,000	35%	16,000	31%
New Brunswick	22,000	39%	18,000	31%	8,000	39%	6,000	30%	14,000	38%	12,000	32%
Quebec	348,000	40%	328,000	37%	174,000	46%	166,000	44%	174,000	34%	162,000	32%
Ontario	353,000	34%	305,000	30%	164,000	37%	143,000	32%	189,000	33%	162,000	28%
Manitoba	40,000	39%	38,000	36%	17,000	42%	15,000	37%	23,000	37%	23,000	36%
Saskatchewan	36,000	36%	31,000	32%	15,000	42%	13,000	36%	21,000	33%	18,000	29%
Alberta	132,000	38%	114,000	33%	66,000	47%	56,000	40%	66,000	32%	58,000	28%
British Columbia	151,000	34%	131,000	30%	69,000	42%	61,000	37%	82,000	30%	71,000	26%
Canada	1,148,000	37%	1,023,000	33%	548,000	42%	490,000	38%	600,000	33%	534,000	30%

TABLE 2.27: POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS 65 AND OVER, BY PROVINCE, 1999

PROVINCE	Unattached Individuals				Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,000	51%	3,000	16%	7,000	63%	3,000	23%	--	--	--	--
Prince Edward Island	2,000	40%	--	6%	2,000	42%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nova Scotia	16,000	41%	6,000	15%	14,000	47%	5,000	18%	--	--	--	--
New Brunswick	13,000	43%	3,000	10%	11,000	46%	3,000	11%	--	--	--	--
Quebec	174,000	58%	105,000	35%	142,000	63%	88,000	39%	32,000	45%	16,000	23%
Ontario	159,000	38%	79,000	19%	125,000	40%	60,000	19%	34,000	31%	19,000	18%
Manitoba	25,000	44%	10,000	19%	21,000	51%	9,000	23%	--	--	--	--
Saskatchewan	20,000	37%	4,000	7%	16,000	42%	3,000	8%	4,000	24%	--	--
Alberta	33,000	36%	14,000	16%	27,000	42%	11,000	16%	5,000	21%	--	--
British Columbia	68,000	40%	32,000	19%	52,000	46%	22,000	20%	16,000	28%	--	--
Canada	519,000	44%	256,000	22%	417,000	49%	204,000	24%	101,000	32%	53,000	17%

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 2.27: POVERTY RATES FOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS 65 AND OVER, BY PROVINCE, 1999

PROVINCE	Unattached Individuals				Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,000	51%	3,000	16%	7,000	63%	3,000	23%	--	--	--	--
Prince Edward Island	2,000	40%	--	6%	2,000	42%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nova Scotia	16,000	41%	6,000	15%	14,000	47%	5,000	18%	--	--	--	--
New Brunswick	13,000	43%	3,000	10%	11,000	46%	3,000	11%	--	--	--	--
Quebec	174,000	58%	105,000	35%	142,000	63%	88,000	39%	32,000	45%	16,000	23%
Ontario	159,000	38%	79,000	19%	125,000	40%	60,000	19%	34,000	31%	19,000	18%
Manitoba	25,000	44%	10,000	19%	21,000	51%	9,000	23%	--	--	--	--
Saskatchewan	20,000	37%	4,000	7%	16,000	42%	3,000	8%	4,000	24%	--	--
Alberta	33,000	36%	14,000	16%	27,000	42%	11,000	16%	5,000	21%	--	--
British Columbia	68,000	40%	32,000	19%	52,000	46%	22,000	20%	16,000	28%	--	--
Canada	519,000	44%	256,000	22%	417,000	49%	204,000	24%	101,000	32%	53,000	17%

-- Sample size too small.

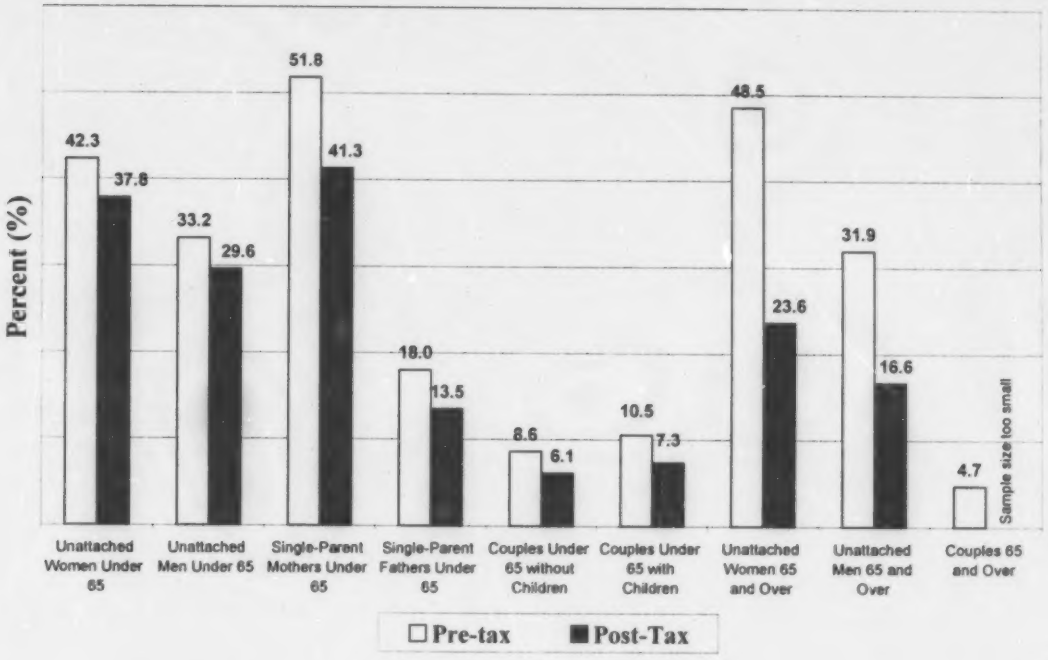
III. SNAPSHOTS OF POVERTY IN 1999

Poverty rates vary with family type, sex, age, employment, education, the size of the area of residence and type of dwelling. Among families with children, rates vary with the number and age of the children. Among immigrants, there are important differences based on the length of time in Canada.

FAMILY TYPE

For Canada, probably the most important overall determinant of the risk of poverty is family type. As we described in Chapter 2, family type refers to the sub-categories of families and unattached individuals that take account of age and gender as well as family circumstances. Figure 3.1 displays the pre-tax and post-tax poverty rates for the different family types. In this chapter, sample sizes are too small to provide information on single-parent fathers.

Figure 3.1: Poverty Rates by Family Type in Canada, 1999



The highest pre-tax poverty rate at 51.8 percent in 1999 belonged to single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18 years of age. Poor unattached female seniors followed closely at 48.5 percent. Unattached women under 65 years of age were next with a poverty rate of 42.3 percent. Couples, especially senior couples, had significantly lower pre-tax poverty rates than single-parent mothers or unattached individuals.

Post-tax poverty rates were lower for all of the groups but the effect of taking taxes into account had a larger impact on seniors than on others. Single-parent mothers had the highest poverty rates, followed by unattached women under 65, then unattached men under 65. Single senior women were next with a poverty rate lower by 24.9 percent. The relative positions of other family types did not change. The large difference in pre- and post-tax rates for seniors reflects the fact that their sources of income are different, including incomes from government programs that are non-taxable.

The pie charts in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show the number of poor families or poor unattached individuals by family type as a proportion of all poor families or of all poor unattached individuals, using both pre-tax and post-tax measures.

Figure 3.2: Distribution of Poor Families by Family Type, 1999

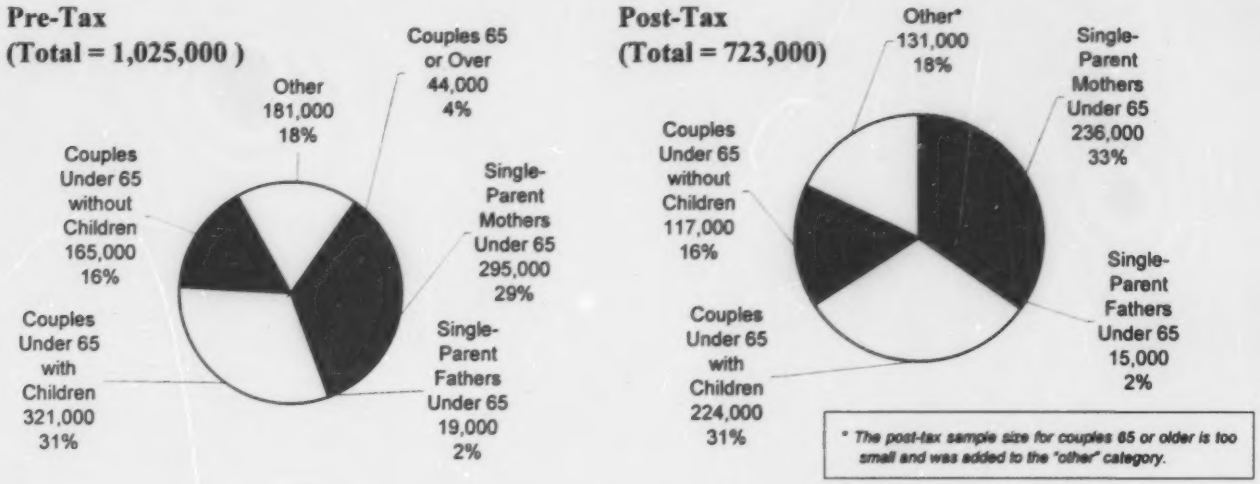

Pre-Tax
(Total = 1,025,000)
Couples 65 or Over 44,000 4%
Other 181,000 18%
Couples Under 65 without Children 165,000 16%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65 295,000 29%
Couples Under 65 with Children 321,000 31%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65 19,000 2%
Post-Tax
(Total = 723,000)
Other* 131,000 18%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65 236,000 33%
Couples Under 65 without Children 117,000 16%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65 15,000 2%
Couples Under 65 with Children 224,000 31%
* The post-tax sample size for couples 65 or older is too small and was added to the "other" category.

Figure 3.3: Distribution of Poor Unattached Individuals by Sex and Age, 1999

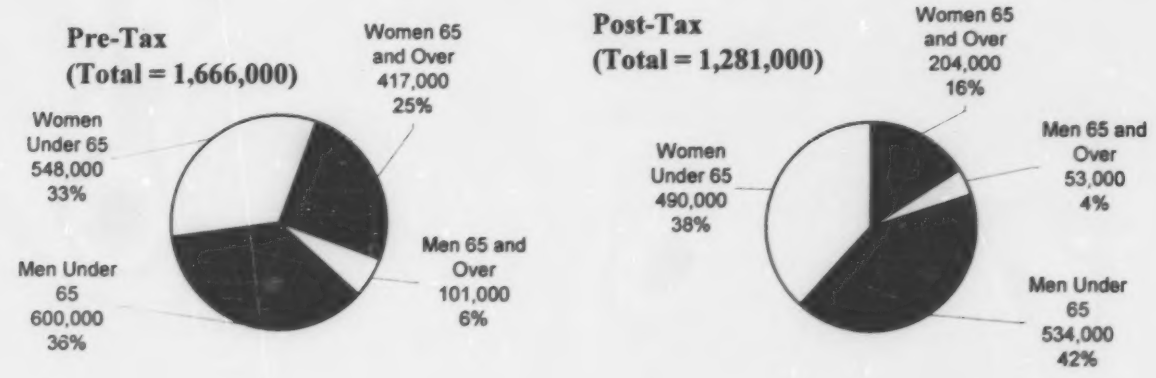
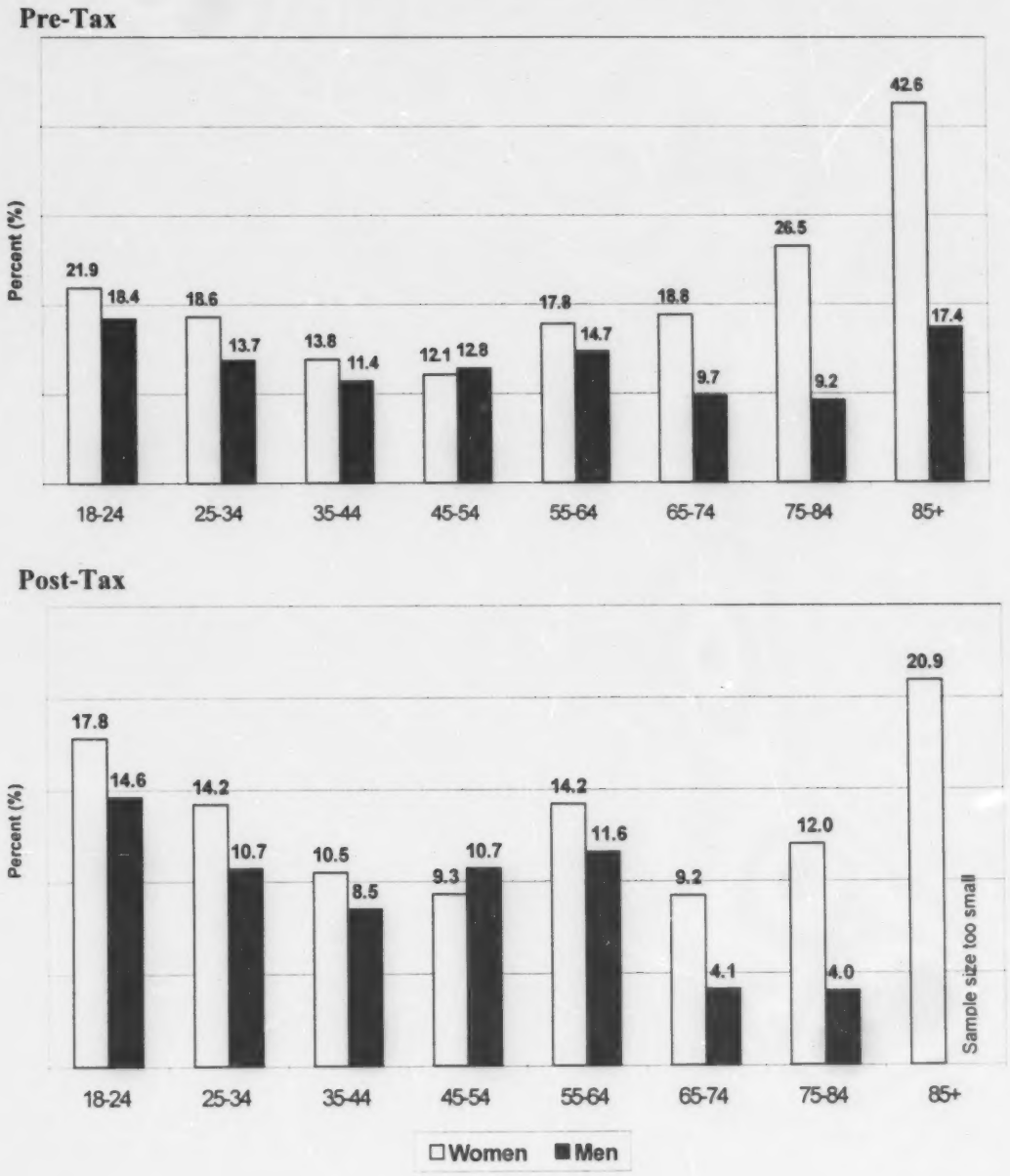

Pre-Tax
(Total = 1,666,000)
Women 65 and Over 417,000 25%
Women Under 65 548,000 33%
Men 65 and Over 101,000 6%
Men Under 65 600,000 36%
Post-Tax
(Total = 1,281,000)
Women 65 and Over 204,000 16%
Men 65 and Over 53,000 4%
Women Under 65 490,000 38%
Men Under 65 534,000 42%

Figure 3.4: Poverty Rates by Age Group and Sex, 1999



DIFFERENCES BY AGE, SEX AND FAMILY TYPE

Figure 3.4 gives the pre-tax and post-tax poverty rates for men and women by age, irrespective of their family status. With the exception of persons aged 45 to 54 years, the rates for women were higher in all cases than the rates for men. The differences between women and men were most pronounced in the oldest groups.

The pre-tax and the post-tax poverty rates for both men and women were relatively high for the age group 18 to 24. That partly reflected both higher unemployment rates among young people and lower entry wages for young people than for experienced workers.

Poverty rates for women declined in the age groups that follow until the age group 55 to 64. Poverty rates for men declined until the age group 45 to 54; they then dropped between 65 and 84 years only to rise again from 85 years. Higher poverty rates for older working age men and women tend to reflect the difficulties older workers have when they lose their jobs.

The higher poverty rates for women aged 55 and older than for their male counterparts reflect significant gender-based differences in labour force attachment, in life expectancy, in marital status and in health or disability status. Generally, women have higher life expectancy than men. In 1999, women were 57 percent of the senior population, many of them living alone, and we have consistently shown in this publication that unattached persons have higher poverty rates than couples.

Senior women had less linkage to the labour force, compared to older men. In 1999, only 3 percent of senior women relative to 10 percent of male seniors were gainfully employed.[1] Additionally, 22 percent of senior women compared to only 3 percent of senior men stated that they had never worked outside the home.[2]

DIFFERENCES BY AGE OF MAJOR INCOME EARNER

Figure 3.5 provides additional information about pre- and post-tax poverty rates by age group among people under 65. The charts highlight some interesting differences among family types according to the age of the major income earner. Both charts feature the poverty rates for couples with children under 18, single-parent mothers, couples with no children under 18 and unattached women and men.

As Figure 3.5 shows, generally, pre-tax poverty rates were highest for young family heads and lowest for older family heads [3]. However, regardless of the age category, single-parent mothers had the highest poverty rates among family heads.

For couples with no children under 18, the pre-tax poverty rate was also highest for the age group under 25 but lowest for the group aged 25 to 44 rather than for the older group. The same patterns are found in the post-tax rates.

---

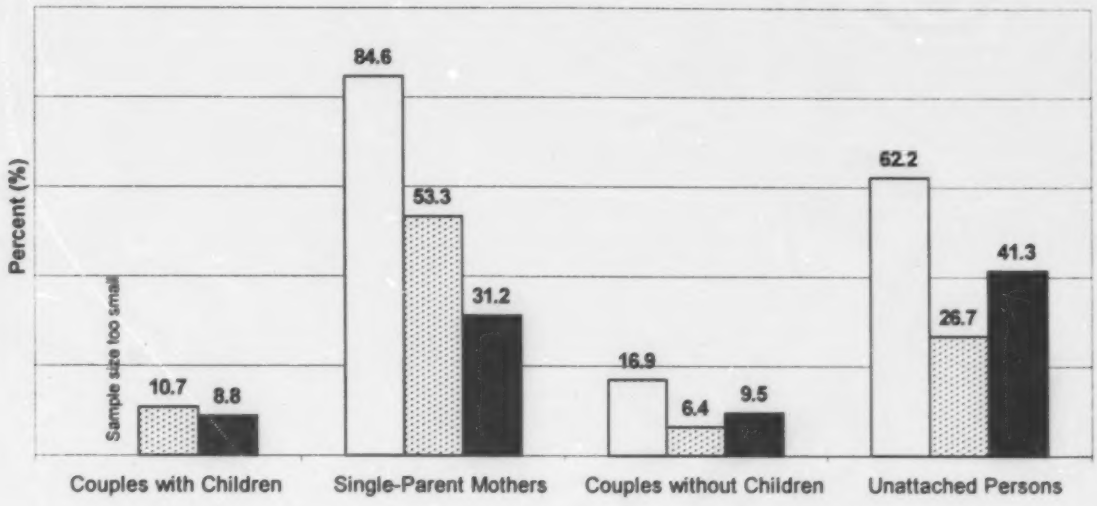
[1] Lindsay, Colin, "Chapter 12: Senior Women", *Women in Canada 2000: A Gender-Based Statistical Report*, Statistics Canada, 2000: p. 275.

[2] Ibid.

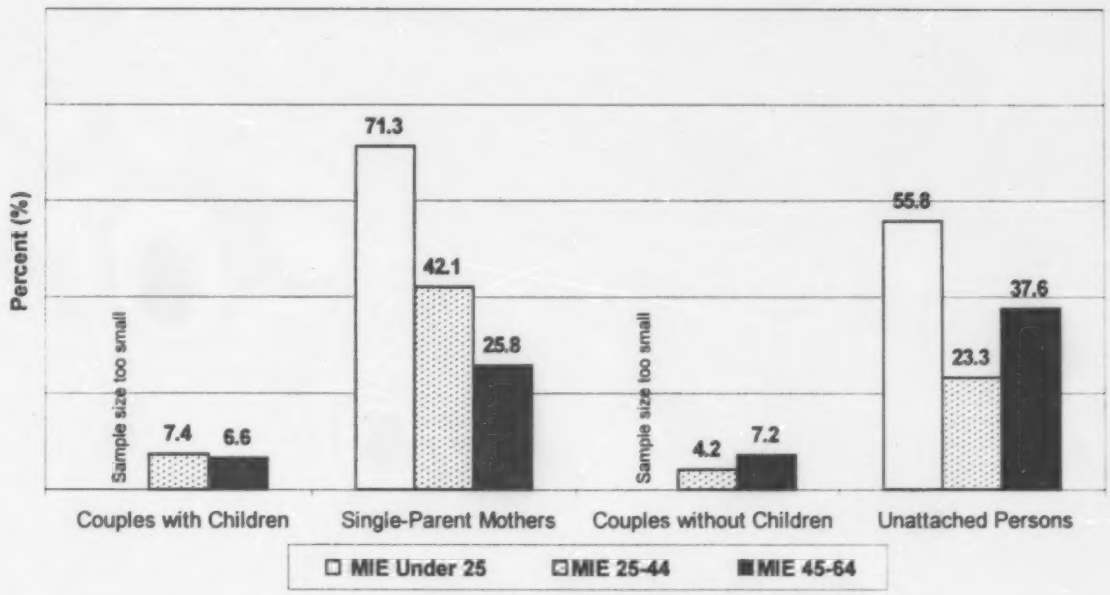
[3] The sample sizes for couples under 25 with children under 18 and for single parent fathers in all age categories were too small to be reliable.

Figure 3.5: Poverty Rates by Family Type and Age of Major Income Earner, 1999

Pre-Tax



Post-Tax



MIE = Major income earner

Figure 3.6: Distribution of Poor Couples Under 65 with Children Under 18, by Age of Major Income Earner, 1999

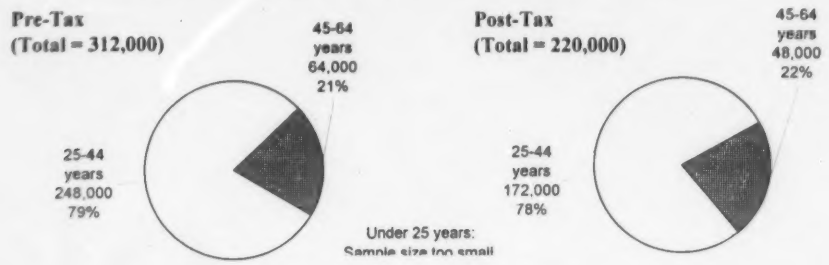


Figure 3.7: Distribution of Poor Single-Parent Mothers, by Age, 1999

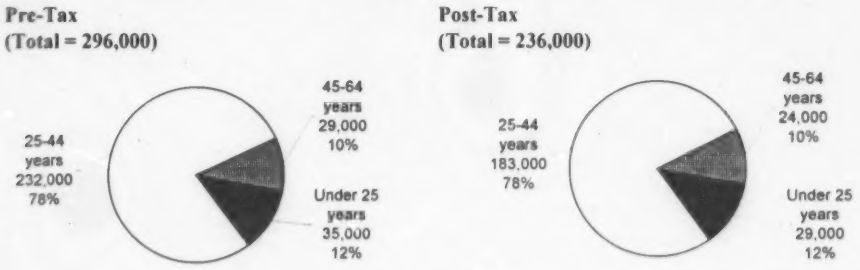


Figure 3.8: Distribution of Poor Couples Under 65 without Children Under 18, by Age of Major Income Earner, 1999

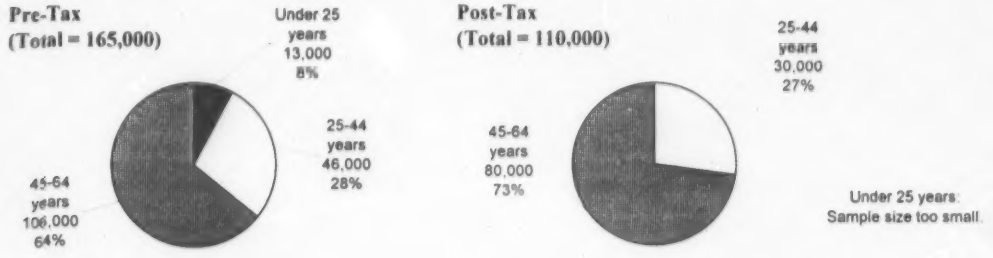
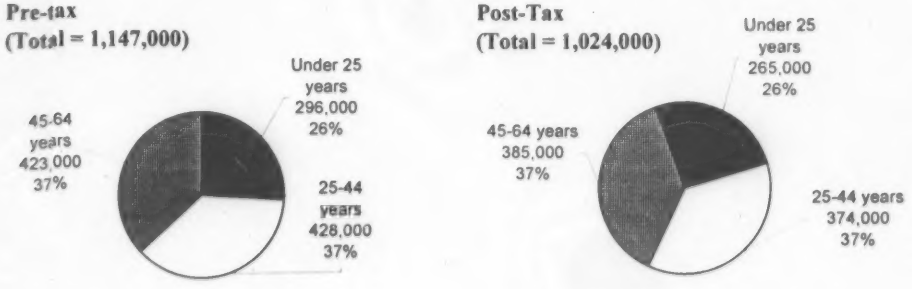


Figure 3.9: Distribution of Poor Unattached Individuals Under 65, by Age, 1999



Figures 3.6 to 3.9 present additional information on the distribution of families and unattached persons by their age group. Parents in the age group 25 to 44 years represent more than three-quarters of couples with children. This is not surprising given that the 20s and 30s are prime child-bearing years. It is also notable that 88 percent of single-parent mothers living in poverty are 25 years of age or older. Young single mothers under 25 are often the stereotype of single motherhood but they make up a modest 12 percent of the total.

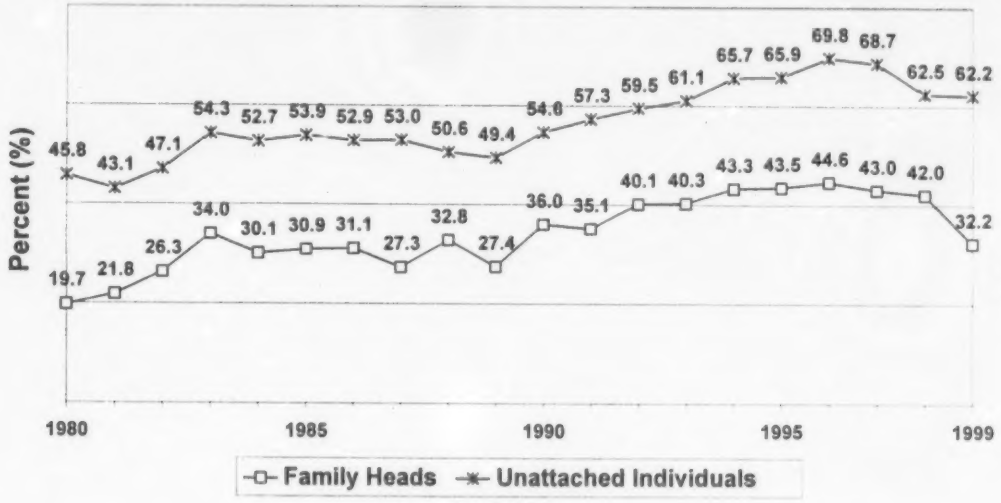
The high poverty rates for older couples without children and older unattached people are doubly disturbing because of the large number of poor people in the age group 45 through 64. Figures 3.6 to 3.9 show that the 45 to 64 age group accounted for more than 60 percent of poor couples with no children under 18 and for 37 percent of poor unattached persons under 65 in 1999.

The link between ageing and poverty among couples without children and unattached people 45 to 64 probably reflects the difficulties in the labour market facing older workers and increasing problems with health or disabilities. Some of the older unattached persons would also include widows and widowers who fell into poverty on the death of a spouse.

Poverty among young families and young unattached people continues to be a concern. Figure 3.10 shows the poverty rates for families headed by people under 25 and unattached individuals under 25 from 1980 to 1999. Poverty rates for unattached people rose following the recession of 1981-1982 and remained at very high levels for most of the rest of the decade. After a slight dip in 1989, rates began rising again and hit a high of 69.8 percent in 1996 before falling to 62.2 percent in 1999.

The picture was a bit less gloomy for young families, but the 1999 poverty rates were still much higher than 1980 levels. As Figure 3.10 shows, the pre-tax poverty rate for families under 25 peaked at 44.6 percent in 1996 and dropped to 32.2 percent in 1999.

Figure 3.10: Pre-Tax Poverty Rates for Family Heads and Unattached Individuals Under 25, 1980-1999

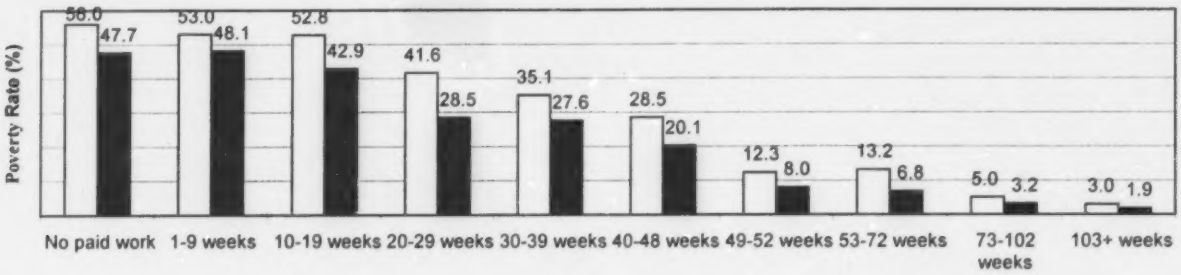


WORK ACTIVITY

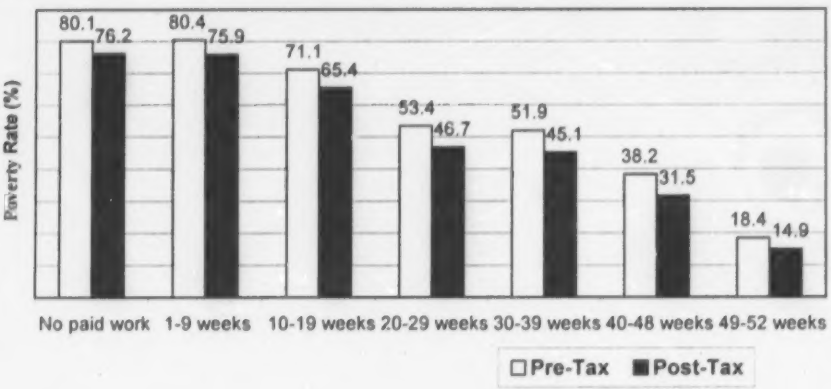
A good job is the best insurance against poverty for many Canadians under the age of 65. One of the most revealing ways of showing how the risk of poverty decreases as work activity increases is to look at the number of weeks worked during the year.

Figure 3.11: Poverty Rates by Weeks of Work, 1999

Families Under 65



Unattached Individuals Under 65



WEEKS OF WORK

Figure 3.11 demonstrates that poverty rates among families with heads under 65 and among unattached individuals declined as weeks of work increased. In this figure, the number of weeks worked for a family includes weeks of work by the major income earner plus weeks of work by a spouse in the case of couples. All the couples with only one wage-earner and all single-parent families are covered by the bars in the graph that end at 49 to 52 weeks of work. The remaining bars represent families where two partners together worked a total of more than 52 weeks. The pre-tax poverty rate for couples working 103 or more weeks in 1999 (the equivalent of two full-year jobs) was 3 percent; the post-tax rate was 1.9 percent.

In Figure 3.11, the pre-tax poverty rate for unattached persons with no paid work was 80.1 percent in 1999. The comparable rate for unattached persons with only one to nine weeks of work in 1999 was even higher at 80.4 percent. The pre-tax rate steadily decreased as the number of weeks worked increased to a low of 18.4 percent for those who worked for 49 to 52 weeks. Post-tax poverty rates for unattached individuals were about four to five percentage points lower across the board but the pattern was similar.

Even a full year of work does not always insulate a person from poverty. As Figures 3.12 and 3.13 show, before accounting for taxes, 330,000 poor unattached persons under 65 worked between 49 and 52 weeks and 90,000 families were poor even when husbands and wives together worked for 103 or more weeks during the year.

NUMBER AND AGE OF CHILDREN

We have seen that poverty rates vary substantially by family type. Rates for two-parent families are relatively low, and rates for families led by single-parents mothers are staggeringly high. Within these general ranges, the rates vary noticeably with the number and age of children.

The graphs in Figure 3.14 show the poverty rates for two family types with children.[4] Although the patterns are not perfect, the two graphs suggest that poverty rates increase with the number of children but decrease once the youngest child reaches school age.

For example, look at the pre-tax poverty rates in Figure 3.14 for families led by single-parent mothers with two children. The poverty rate for these families when both children were under age seven was 78.6 percent in 1999. The rate drops to 65.7 percent when the two children were of mixed age groups - one under seven and one seven to 17. The lowest rate was 43.7 percent when both children were seven or older.

[4] The sample estimates for single-parent fathers were too small to be statistically reliable. The post-tax sample size for single-parent mothers with three or more children under seven years of age was also too small.

Figure 3.12: Distribution of Poor Families Under 65 by Weeks of Work, 1999

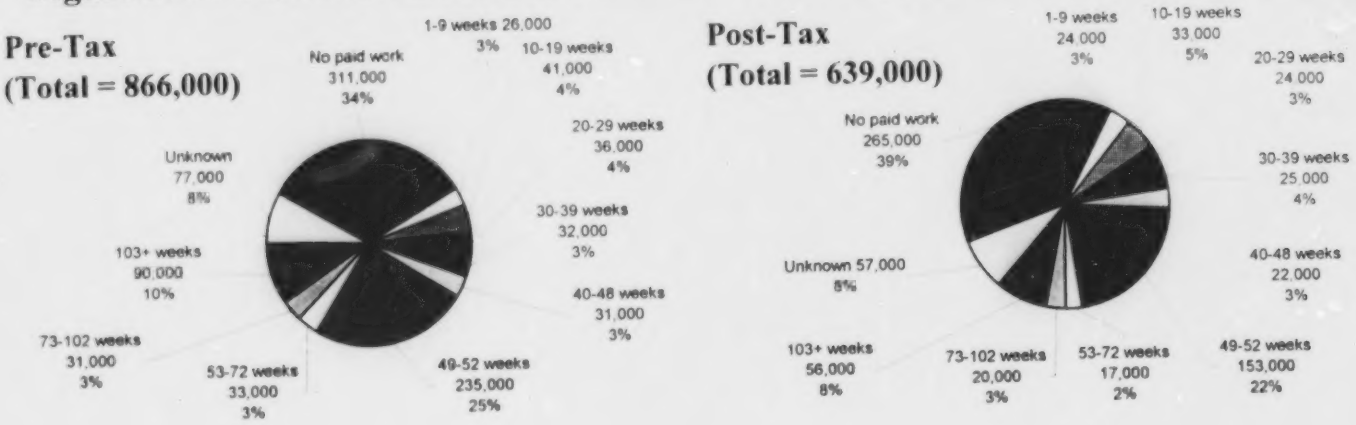


Figure 3.13: Distribution of Poor Unattached Individuals Under 65 by Weeks of Work, 1999

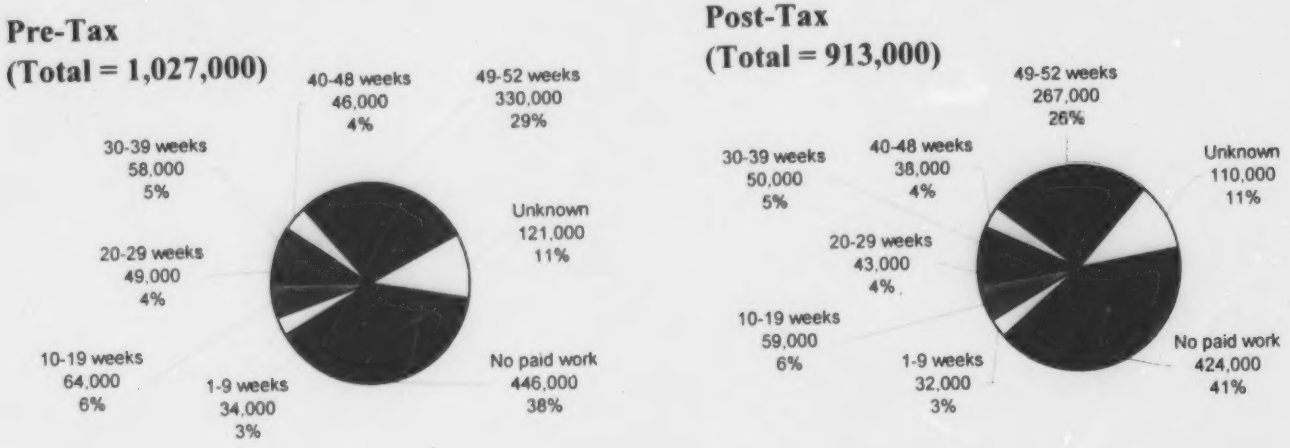
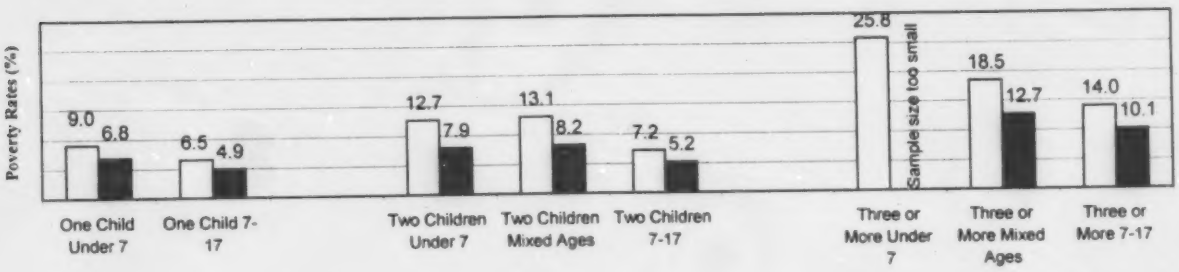
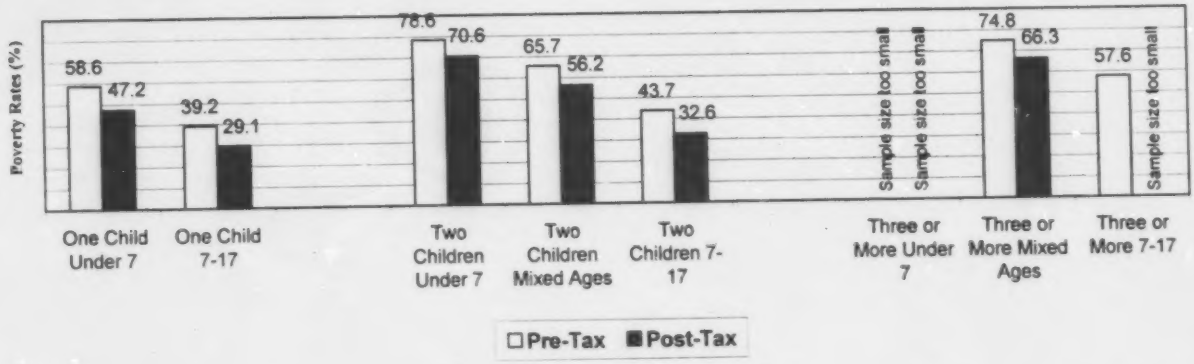


Figure 3.14: Poverty Rates by Number and Age Group of Children Under 18, 1999

Two-Parent Families Under 65



Single-Parent Mothers Under 65



In Canada, the risk of poverty is higher for families of all types with very young children because the job of caring for infants and toddlers often keeps one parent, usually the mother, out of the labour force completely for a period of time or limits the amount of time available for paid work. For most Canadian families with children, the absence of high-quality, affordable childcare is a major problem. The problem is especially acute for single parents who receive little or no support from the child's other parent.

In a recent report using measures of poverty different from ours, the United Nations Children's Fund found that in countries such as Sweden and Norway, poverty rates tended to be higher for single-parent households than for two-parent families as well.[5] The U.N. poverty rate for Canada for single-parent mothers was about 51.6 percent, however, while for Sweden the comparable rate was only 6.7 percent. Canada was still ahead of the United States by about 3 percentage points but it lagged behind the United Kingdom by about 5 percentage points.

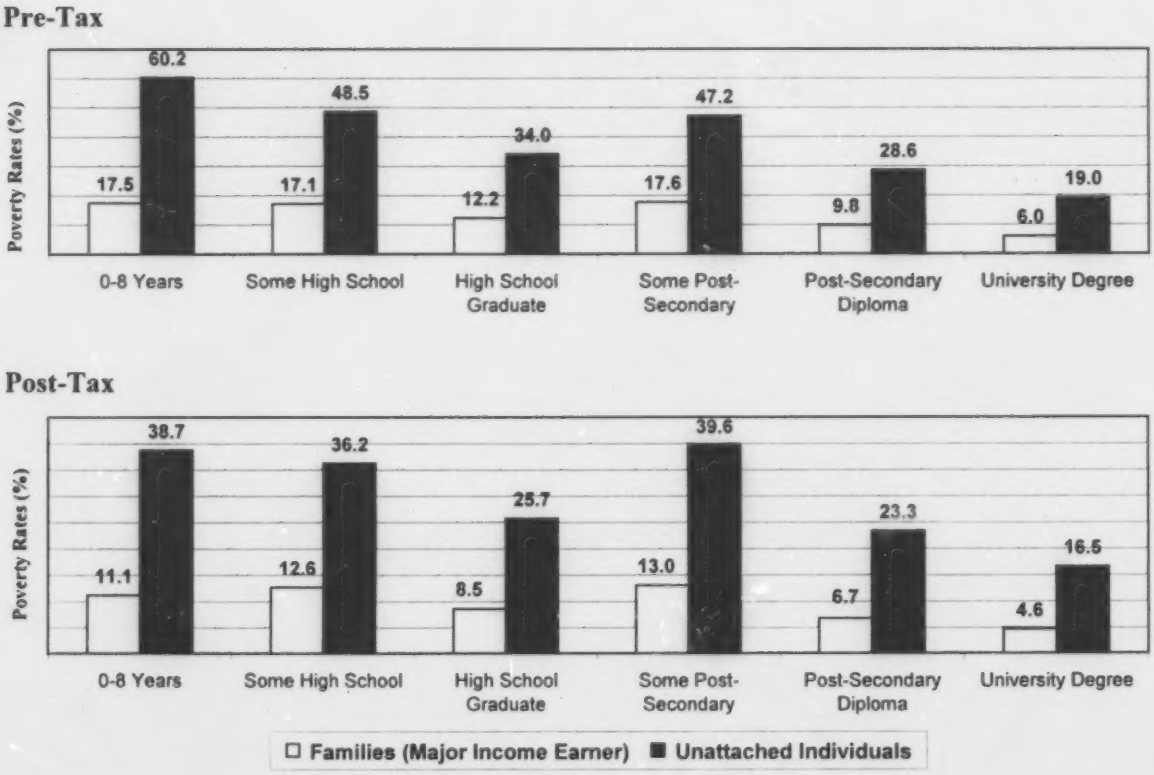
[5] *A League Table of Child Poverty in Rich Nations*, Innocenti Report Card, United Nations Children's Fund, Innocenti Research Centre (Florence, Italy; Page 10).

The reason behind the Canadian and Nordic differences in poverty rates for families with children, especially those headed by single parents, lies primarily in the type of active labour market and taxation policies pursued by each of these countries rather than in differences in economic growth or national wealth. Both Norway and Sweden recognize that quality labour force attachment is a key poverty-reduction tool. They also recognize that access to affordable childcare is vital to labour force attachment for families with children, especially those headed by single parents. Accordingly, Nordic countries have given greater priority to the provision of childcare and other supports for families with children. In contrast, the number of registered childcare spaces in Canada is severely limited and varies from one province to another.

EDUCATION

The risk of poverty tends to decrease as people get more schooling. Figure 3.15 shows that the pre-tax poverty rates for unattached persons in 1999 fell more or less steadily from 60.2 percent for individuals who had less than nine years of primary education to 19 percent for people with university degrees. Post-tax poverty rates follow a similar pattern.

Figure 3.15: Poverty Rates by Highest Level of Education Completed, 1999



The two charts show that heads of families generally had lower and flatter poverty rates than unattached individuals. However, education also emerged as a moderate predictor of poverty rates among heads of families. The two highest pre-tax rates were 17.5 percent for heads of families with less than eight years of education and 17.6 percent for heads of families with some post-secondary education. The lowest pre-tax rate was 6 percent for those with university degrees. A reason why level of education is not neatly inversely related with poverty rates is due to the fact that many persons with some post-secondary education or some high school are either mature students or persons between the ages of 18 and 24 years.

Figure 3.16: Poverty Rates by Family Type and Level of Education Completed, 1999

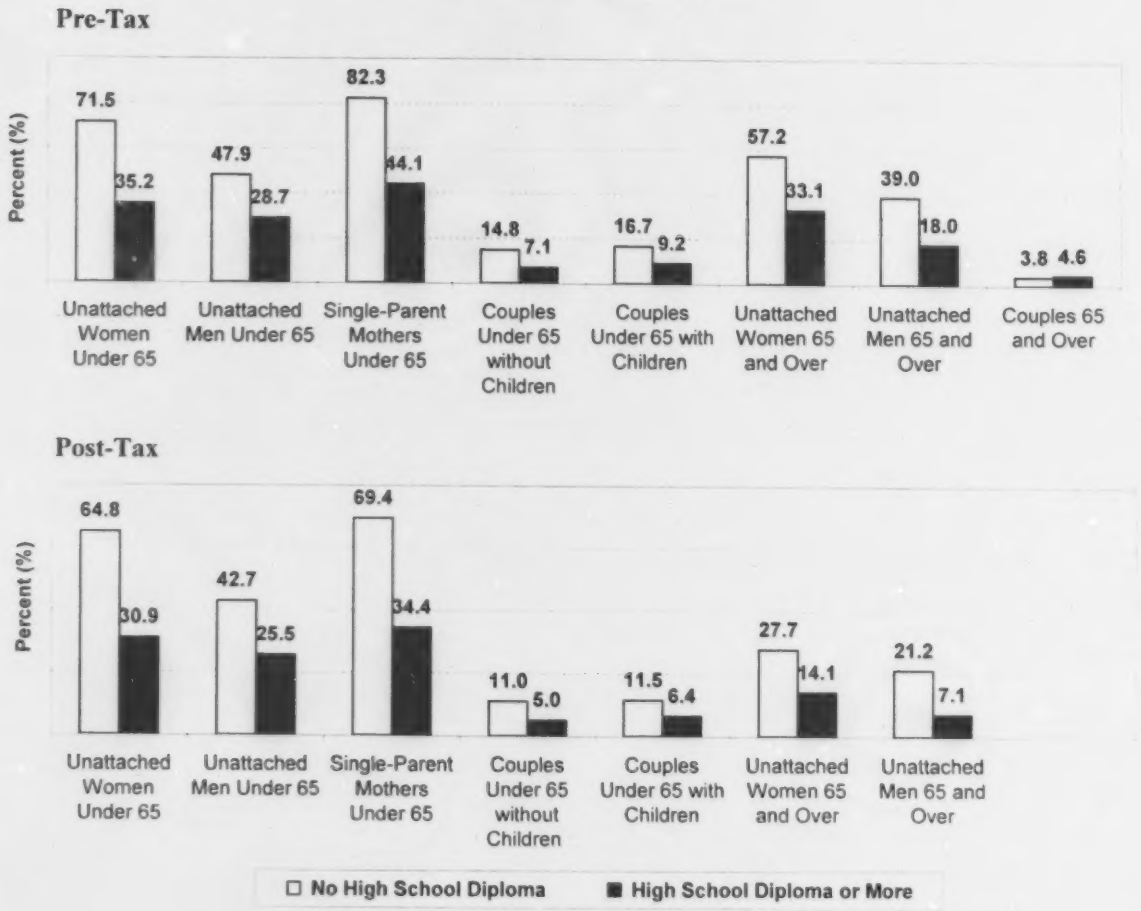


Figure 3.16 shows how poverty rates vary by family type and level of education attained. For both high school graduates and non-graduates, single-parent mothers and unattached individuals have higher poverty rates than couples. The poverty rate for families led by single-

parent mothers with less than a high school education was 82.3 percent, the highest rate among all those who did not graduate from high school. Single-parent mothers who did graduate had a poverty rate of 48.4 percent - again the highest of any family type, but much lower than the rate for single-parent mothers without high school diplomas. This shows that family type and level of education both influence a person's risk of poverty.

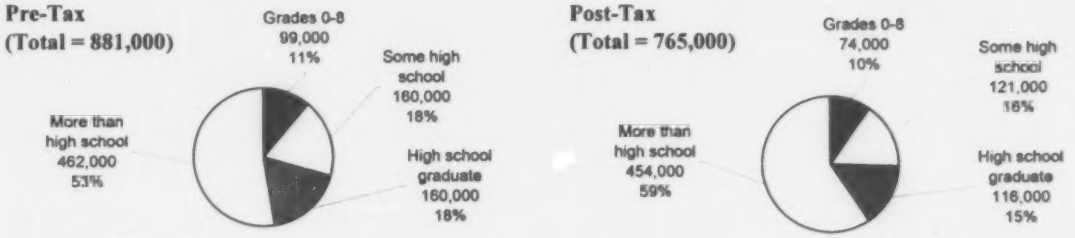
Poor education can be both a cause of poverty and an effect. Young people who drop out of school may be poor because they lack the skills needed to get good jobs. On the other hand, young women who drop out of school if they get pregnant may be poor because of the hardships associated with single parenthood. The fact that they are poorly educated is a result of their family circumstances rather than an immediate cause of poverty.

Education has become much more important as a requirement for many jobs in recent decades. It is not surprising to find a marked difference in the poverty statistics by level of education when they are broken down into people under 65 and people 65 and older.

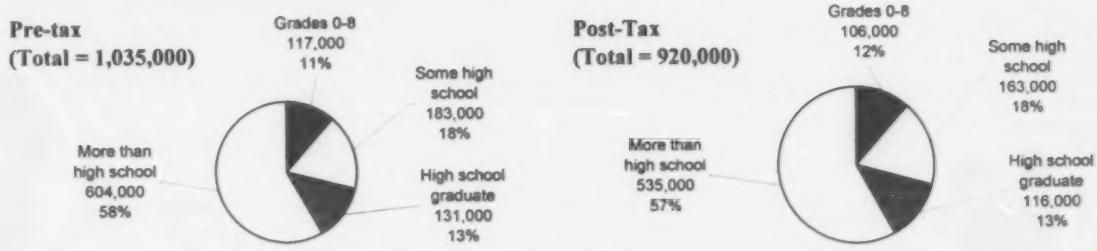
The charts in Figure 3.17 present the distribution of poor working-age family heads and poor unattached individuals by the level of education of the major income earner in 1999. They highlight that the majority of people living in poverty under 65 had more than a high school education. For the senior population living in poverty the situation is quite different where large proportions have less than nine years of education. This may be a very important factor affecting seniors' access to benefits and services.

Figure 3.17: Distribution of Poor Families and Unattached Individuals by Level of Completed Education of Major Income Earner, 1999

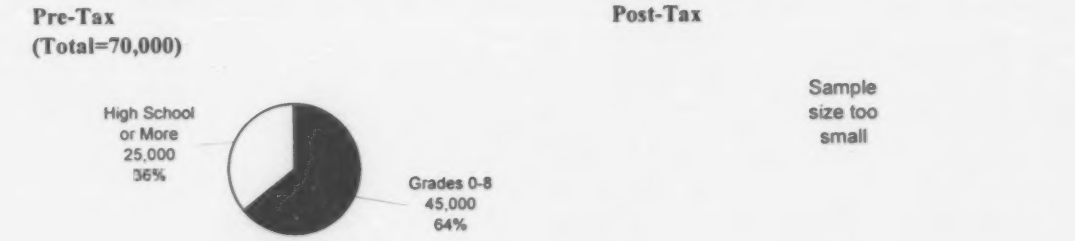
FAMILIES UNDER 65



UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65



FAMILIES 65 AND OVER



UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS 65 AND OVER

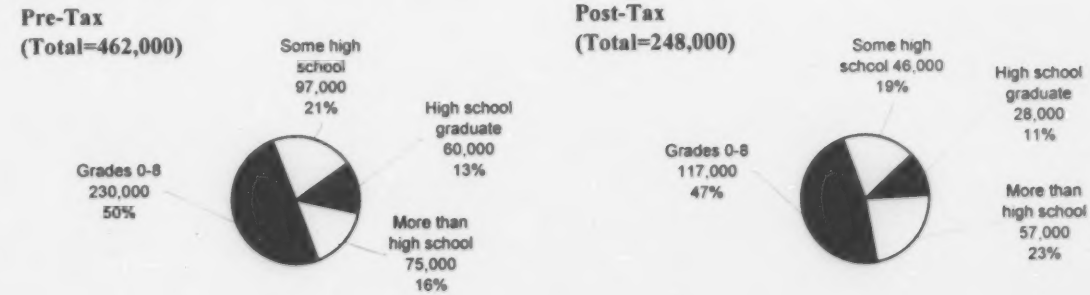
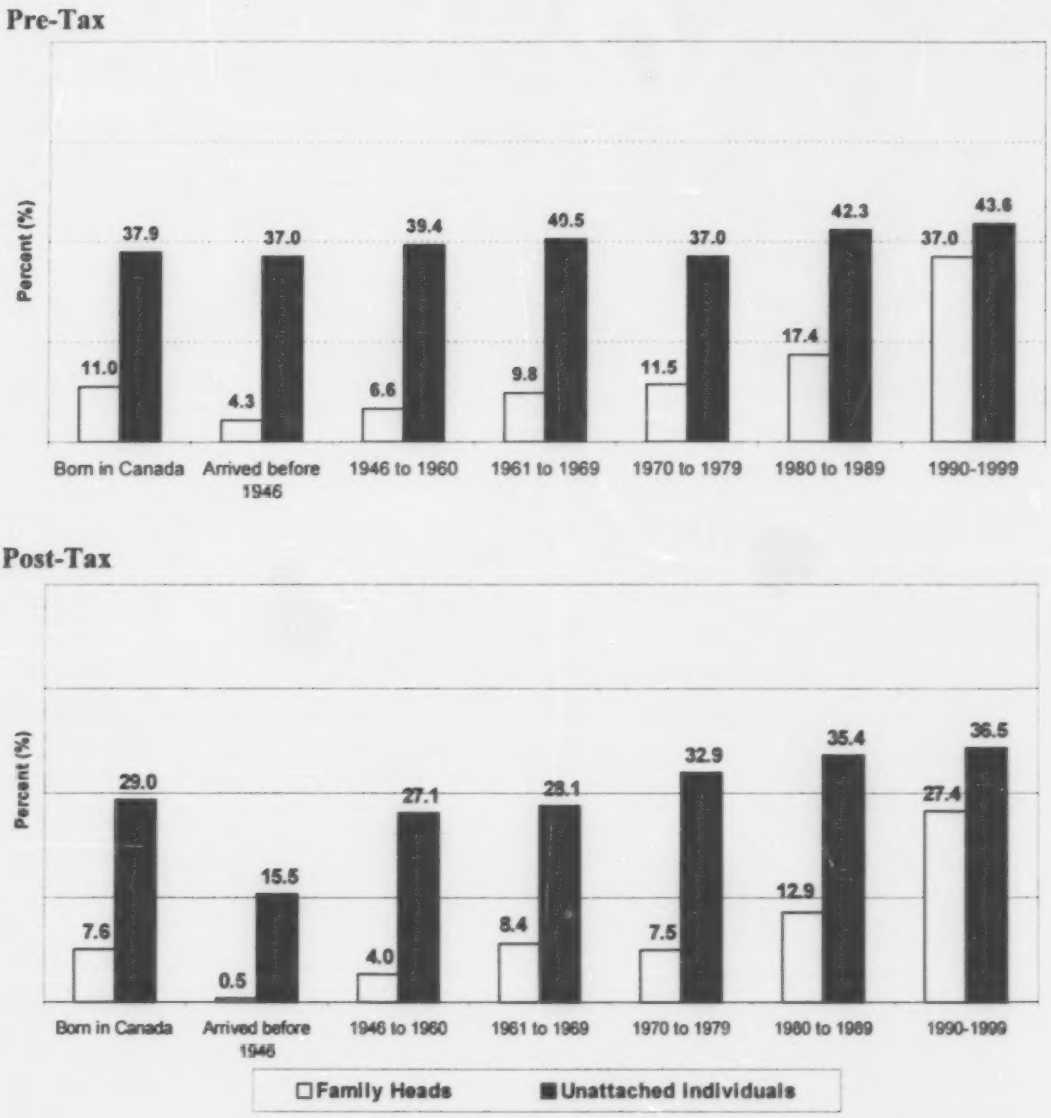


Figure 3.18: Poverty Rates for Immigrants, by Period of Immigration, 1999



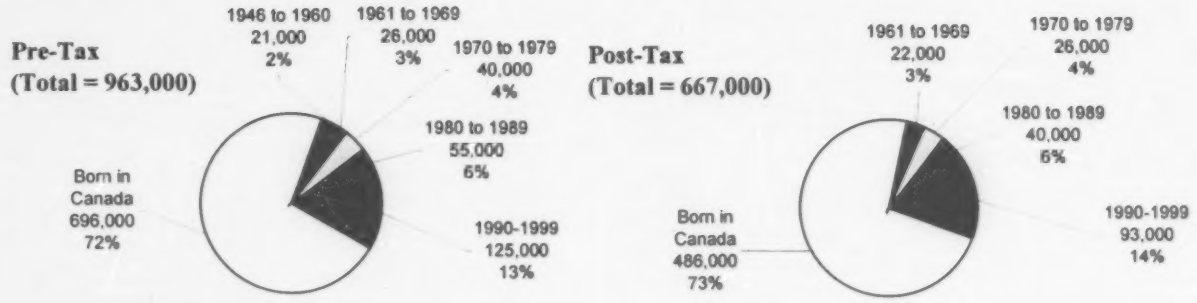
YEAR OF IMMIGRATION

Poverty rates are generally lower for unattached individuals and families headed by people born in Canada than for comparable groups of recent immigrants. The reasons for the discrepancies vary. Timing of the arrival of immigrants seems to be a factor: poverty rates among immigrants who arrive during periods of boom are generally lower than among

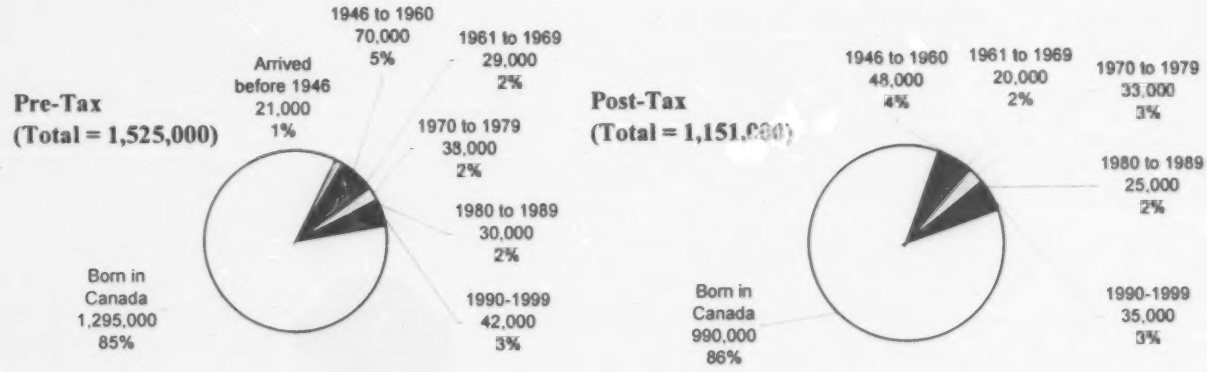
immigrants who arrive in periods of recession. Workplace barriers may also play a role. Though highly skilled, many immigrants often have to meet stringent accreditation criteria by professional bodies, particularly at the provincial level. In Chapter 7, we demonstrate that poverty rates are higher among immigrants who are visible minorities. Figure 3.19 shows the distribution of poor families and unattached individuals by period of immigration.

Figure 3.19: Distribution of Poor Families and Unattached Individuals by Period of Immigration, 1999

FAMILIES



UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS



AREA OF RESIDENCE

The charts in Figure 3.20 show poverty among families and unattached people by the size of their communities. They show that poverty rates are higher in large cities than in small towns and rural areas for both families and unattached individuals.

Figure 3.21 shows the distribution of poor families and unattached individuals by community size. In 1999, 54 percent of all poor families and 54 percent of all poor unattached people lived in cities of half a million people or more, using pre-tax measures. Using post-tax measures, an even greater majority of poor families and individuals lived in the largest cities.

Figure 3.20: Poverty Rates by Size of Area of Residence, 1999

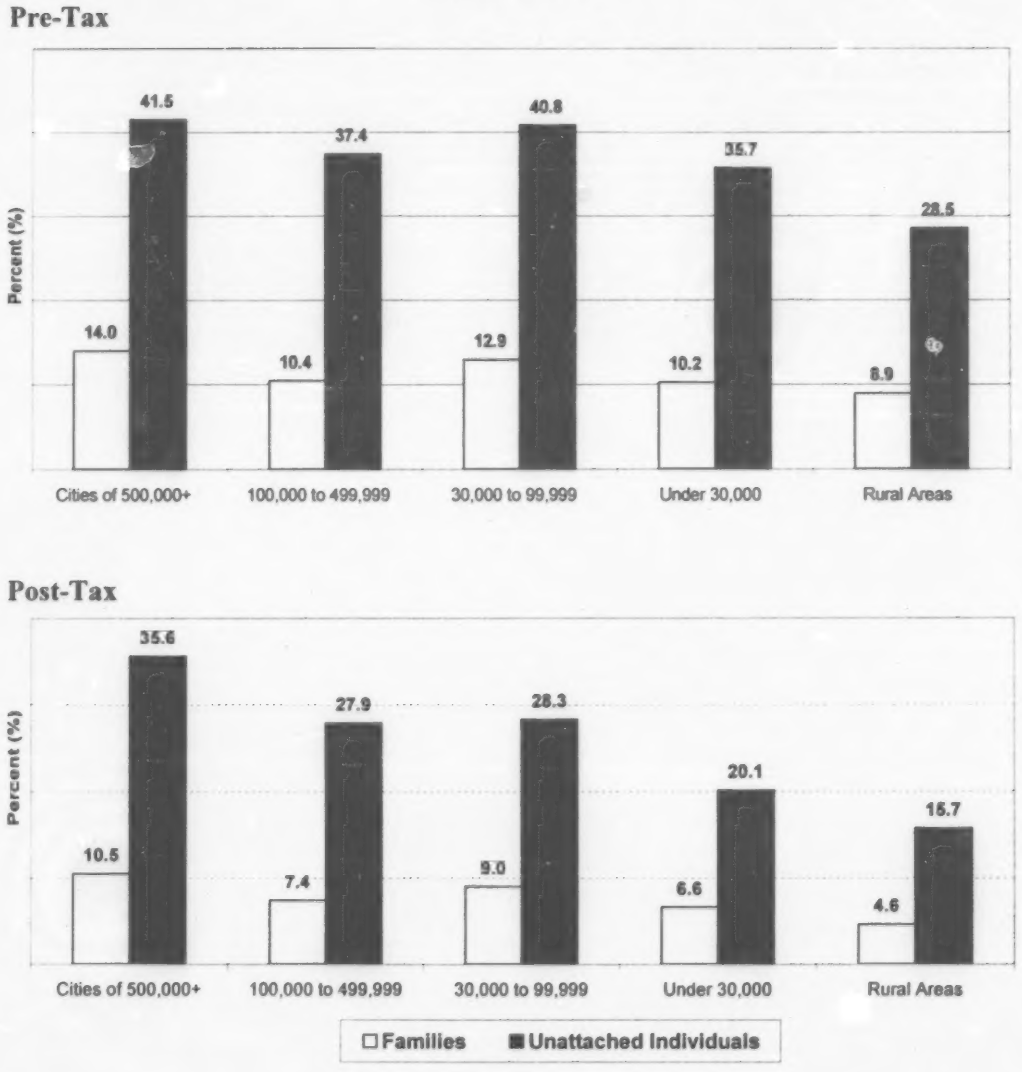
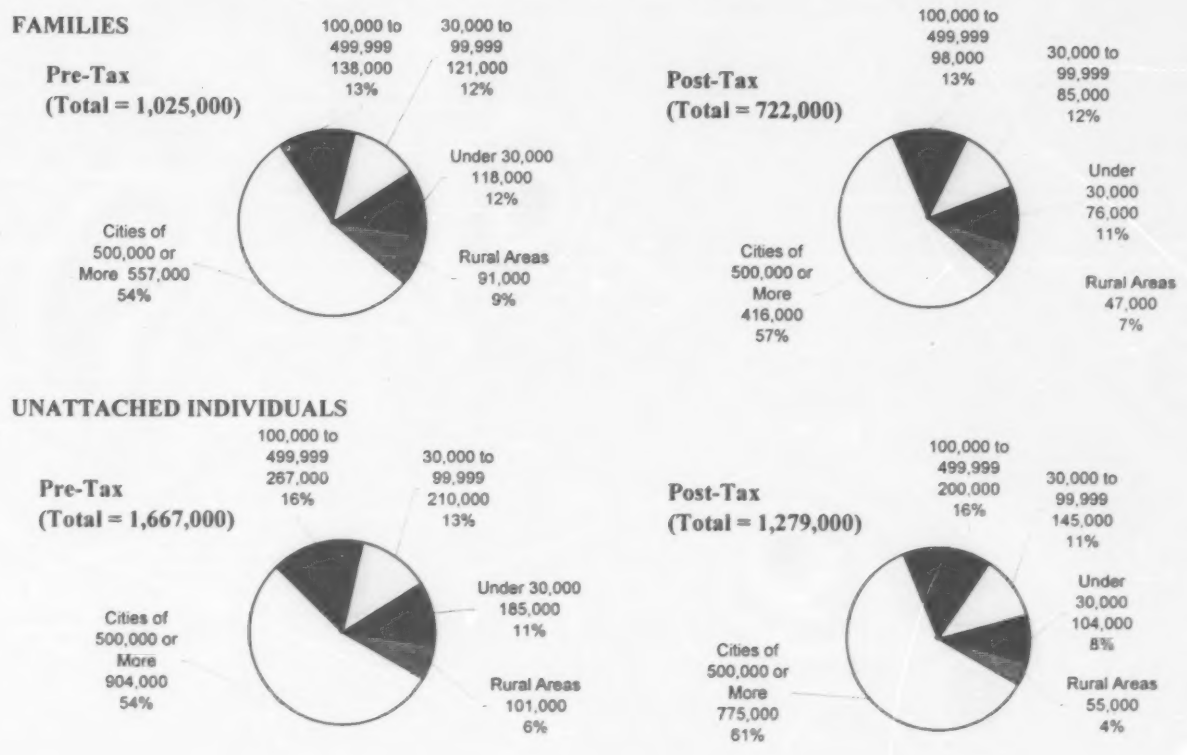


Figure 3.21: Distribution of Poor Families and Unattached Individuals by Size of Area of Residence, 1999



DWELLING TENURE

As the charts in Figure 3.22 show, poverty rates are higher for families and unattached individuals who do not own their own dwelling.

Among all families, poverty rates are several times lower for those who own their dwellings compared to those who rent or have other arrangements. Generally, the poverty rate for unattached individuals is higher, holding dwelling tenure constant. The poverty rate for families who own their own dwelling is 6.4 percent compared to 28.9 percent among unattached individuals who own their dwelling.

There are also significant differences between seniors and non-seniors. The pre-tax poverty rate of 15.3 percent for older families who did not own their own house was about half of the pre-tax poverty rate of 30.9 percent for families whose major income earner is less than 65 years of age. In contrast, poverty rates were higher for unattached individuals 65 years or older than for unattached individuals under 65.

The majority of poor families under 65 do not own their dwelling whereas the majority of poor senior families are owners. For unattached individuals, the majority in both age groups

are not owners but there is still a significant difference by age with poor older unattached individuals more likely to be owners than their younger counterparts.

Figure 3.22: Poverty Rates of Families and Unattached Individuals by Dwelling Tenure, 1999

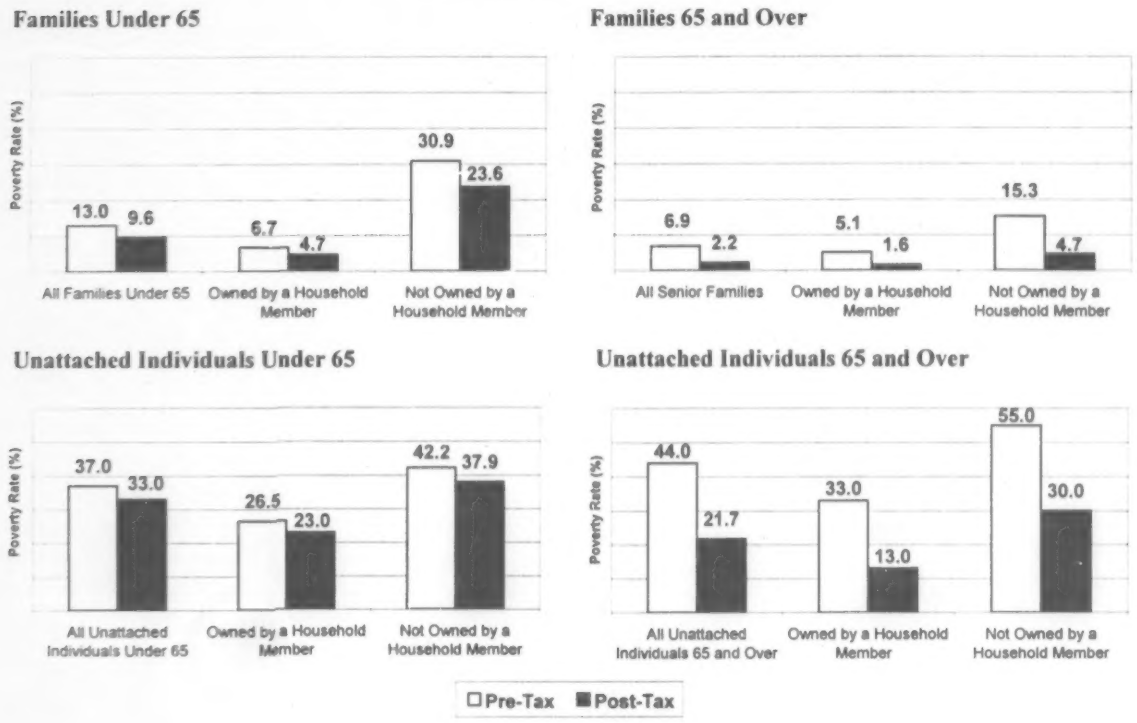


TABLE 3.23: DISTRIBUTION OF POOR FAMILIES AND POOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS, BY DWELLING TENURE, 1999

	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax	
	Owned by a Household Member	Not Owned by a Household Member	Owned by a Household Member	Not Owned by a Household Member
All Families	397,000	565,000	260,000	419,000
Families Under 65	348,000	539,000	245,000	412,000
Families 65 and Over	49,000	26,000	15,000	--
All Unattached Individuals	469,000	1,090,000	313,000	872,000
Unattached Individuals Under 65	271,000	791,000	235,000	710,000
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over	199,000	299,000	78,000	163,000

-- Sample size too small.

IV. POOR CANADIANS AND THEIR SOURCES OF INCOME

In other chapters we consider the financial plight of poor people in terms of depth and duration of poverty. In this chapter, we examine the degree to which they are excluded from the benefits of economic prosperity in Canada by comparing their incomes to the average incomes of non-poor Canadians, according to family type. We also assess the risk of being poor according to sources of income.

Table 4.1 presents the 1999 pre-tax and post-tax average incomes of poor Canadians and non-poor Canadians by family type. It shows that the average incomes of non-poor Canadians were, at the very least, more than twice the average incomes of poor Canadians for virtually all of the family types. For example, among couples without children, the average incomes of the poor were less than a fifth of the average incomes of the more affluent.

There is also a significant gender gap in the incomes of both poor and non-poor Canadians. Generally, families headed by men had higher average incomes than families headed by women. For example, among non-poor unattached individuals under 65 years of age, the pre-tax income of women ($26,017) was, on average, $4,895 less than the pre-tax income of men ($30,912). Similarly, among non-poor single parents, the average pre-tax income of women ($40,044) was only about 76 percent of the average pre-tax income of men ($52,706).

Among most poor family heads however, women's average incomes tended to be slightly higher than men's average incomes. For example, among poor unattached seniors, women's pre-tax income was $96 more than men's. Likewise, among poor single parents, women's incomes were, on average, $1,505 higher than men's. Differences may arise because the proportion of women who are poor tends to be higher than the proportion of men who are poor and there tends to be less income inequality between poor and non-poor women than between poor and non-poor men. For families, there may also be differences in the number of children in male and female-headed households and child benefits could increase family income.

Post-tax income measures reveal that even at very low incomes, people pay income tax, so that for all individuals and families, whether poor or non-poor, their average post-tax incomes are lower than their pre-tax incomes. The percentage change, however, varies. The post-tax income of poor senior couples was considerably reduced by 28 percent from $18,185 to $13,111. Poor couples without children and poor single-parent fathers also saw significant reductions of 14.9 percent and 13.3 percent from their pre-tax incomes. The reduction was lowest for unattached individuals at 5 percent for women and 5.8 percent for men. Among unattached persons under 65, the reduction ranged from 7.5 percent for men to 8.5 percent for women. Single-parent mothers also saw a modest reduction of 7 percent.

TABLE 4.1: AVERAGE INCOMES OF POOR AND NON-POOR CANADIANS, 1999						
Family Type	Pre-Tax			Post-Tax		
	Income of Poor ($)	Income of Non-Poor ($)	Income of Poor as Percentage of Non-Poor (%)	Income of Poor ($)	Income of Non-poor ($)	Income of Poor as Percentage of Non-Poor (%)
Unattached Women Under 65	8,436	38,892	22%	7,717	37,128	21%
Unattached Men Under 65	8,722	41,934	21%	8,068	40,477	20%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	15,971	40,044	40%	14,754	36,601	40%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	14,466	52,706	27%	12,534	51,039	25%
Couples Under 65 without Children	12,232	68,012	18%	10,411	66,638	16%
Couples Under 65 with Children	22,892	78,564	29%	20,576	76,850	28%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	13,249	27,850	48%	12,590	23,306	54%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	13,153	32,922	40%	12,390	29,437	42%
Couples 65 and Over	18,185	45,724	40%	--	--	--

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 4.1B: PRE-TAX INCOMES OF THE POOR COMPARED TO AVERAGE INCOMES, 1998 and 1999 (IN 1999 CONSTANT DOLLARS)						
Family Type	1998			1999		
	Income of Poor ($)	Income of Non-Poor ($)	Income of Poor as Percentage of Non-Poor (%)	Income of Poor ($)	Income of Non-poor ($)	Income of Poor as Percentage of Non-Poor (%)
Unattached Women Under 65	8,466	36,490	23%	8,436	38,892	22%
Unattached Men Under 65	8,701	40,788	21%	8,722	41,934	21%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	15,384	41,484	37%	15,971	40,044	40%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	14,009	54,342	26%	14,466	52,706	27%
Couples Under 65 without Children	12,129	69,891	17%	12,232	68,012	18%
Couples Under 65 with Children	21,990	77,163	28%	22,892	78,564	29%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	13,384	27,485	49%	13,249	27,850	48%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	12,813	34,555	37%	13,153	32,922	40%
Couples 65 and Over	17,983	44,254	41%	18,185	45,724	40%

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However, after taxes, the ratio of average incomes of poor persons as a proportion of the average incomes of non-poor persons did not change significantly for most of the family types. The ratio decreased slightly by a range of 1 to 2 percentage points for single persons, childless couples under 65, single-parent fathers and couples with children and remained unchanged for single-parent mothers.

Poor couples with children had the largest increase in average incomes between 1998 and 1999 at just over $900 while the income of poor unattached senior women decreased by $135. The largest change in the ratio of the income of the poor to the non-poor was for single-parent mothers. It went from 37 percent to 40 percent in 1999 but the change is largely due to a decrease in the income of non-poor single mothers. Unattached senior men had a similar pattern.

TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Obviously, many poor Canadians rely on government income support programs to help make ends meet. In some cases, the amounts provided by governments are surprisingly modest, and the amounts provided by earnings and non-government sources of income are substantial. In other cases, especially in the case of poor seniors, governments provide a very large portion of total income.

Table 4.2 shows the average amount of pre-tax and post-tax "transfer payments" received by poor families and unattached individuals in 1999. Transfer payments include Employment Insurance, Old Age Security, Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Spouse's Allowance, Child Tax Benefit, other child credits or allowances, welfare from provincial and municipal programs, workers' compensation benefits, GST/HST credits, provincial and territorial tax credits and any other government transfers. The Canada and Quebec Pension Plans and Employment Insurance are government-run programs, but the money comes from contributions by workers and employers, not from general government revenues.

As Table 4.2 demonstrates, couples without children, unattached individuals and couples with children who were living in poverty derived less than half of their pre-tax incomes from transfers. Government transfers accounted for about two-thirds to three-quarters of the pre-tax income of poor single parents while they provided close to 90 percent or more of total pre-tax income for poor seniors.

With the notable exception of senior couples, transfer payments accounted for an even larger share of the incomes of those who were poor according to post-tax measures.

TABLE 4.2: TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO THE POOR BY FAMILY TYPE, 1999

Family Type	Average Transfer Payment ($)	Average Income from All Sources ($)	Transfers as Percentage of Total Income (%)
Pre-Tax			
Unattached Women Under 65	3,682	8,436	43.6%
Unattached Men Under 65	3,564	8,722	40.9%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	10,752	15,971	67.3%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	10,585	14,466	73.2%
Couples Under 65 without Children	5,482	12,232	44.8%
Couples Under 65 with Children	10,177	22,892	44.5%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	11,892	13,249	89.8%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	12,434	13,153	94.5%
Couples 65 and Over	16,466	18,185	90.5%
Post-Tax			
Unattached Women Under 65	3,693	7,717	47.9%
Unattached Men Under 65	3,527	8,068	43.7%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	10,859	14,754	73.6%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	9,842	12,534	78.5%
Couples Under 65 without Children	5,223	10,411	50.2%
Couples Under 65 with Children	9,973	20,576	48.5%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	11,464	12,590	91.1%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	12,073	12,390	97.4%
Couples 65 and Over	--	--	--

-- Sample size too small.

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Unattached Men 65 and Over	12,073	12,390	97.4%
Couples 65 and Over	--	--	--

-- Sample size too small.

SOURCES OF INCOME

SENIORS

A variety of transfer programs for seniors at all levels of government explains why poverty rates for seniors have plummeted over the years as shown in preceding discussions. Table 4.3 lists some of these government programs and other common sources of income for poor senior couples and poor unattached men and women 65 and older.

For each family type, information is provided for those who fall below the poverty line using pre-tax and post-tax measures. The table indicates the percentage of poor families or unattached individuals with income from a particular source and the average amount received per recipient. Poor people who did not receive a particular type of income were not included in calculating the average amount of that income source.

Almost all poor seniors received a sizeable portion of their total pre-tax incomes from the federal government's Old Age Security (OAS) pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). The reason that less than 100 percent of seniors received income OAS or GIS is probably because some poor seniors were recent immigrants to Canada who did not meet the residence requirements. Moreover, there is evidence that not all seniors who are eligible for GIS, which is an income-tested benefit, have applied for a variety of reasons[1]. The average amount of OAS and GIS for poor senior couples in 1999 was $12,349 and the average for an unattached male senior was $8,271. The maximum benefit available in the 1999 fiscal year was $17,694 for couples and $10,913 for individuals.

For unattached seniors, the second most important source of income was the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan. About 81.7 percent of poor unattached senior men and about 72.3 percent of poor unattached senior women received either CPP or QPP benefits. About 76.8 percent of poor senior couples also depended on CPP or QPP as a key source of income. The maximum benefit under the two plans in the 1999 fiscal year was $9,020 and the maximum survivor benefit was $5,412. Because benefits are tied to earnings, people with lower earnings in their working years get lower benefits at retirement.

Nearly half of poor senior couples and over 40 percent of poor unattached female seniors had some investment and savings income in 1999. Such investments accounted for 11 percent of the average income of both groups of seniors. In contrast, only 26.5 percent of poor senior men had investments and savings. Moreover, investments and savings constituted only 7 percent of the average total income of poor unattached male seniors.

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[1] See Shillington, Richard, "The Dark Side of Targeting: Retirement Savings for Low-Income Canadians", *The Pension Papers*, C. D. Howe Institute (September 30, 1999) and, Longfield, Judi, M. P. Chair, *The Guaranteed Income Supplement: The Duty to Reach All*, report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (December 2001).

TABLE 4.3: SOURCES OF INCOME FOR POOR SENIORS, 1999						
Income Type	Poor Senior Couples		Poor Unattached Senior Men		Poor Unattached Senior Women	
	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)
Pre-Tax						
Total of Poor in Category	44,000		101,000		417,000	
Old Age Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement	89.5%	12,349	99.3%	8,271	98.5%	8,489
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	76.8%	5,110	81.7%	4,133	72.3%	3,730
Investments and Savings	48.7%	2,035	26.4%	949	43.5%	1,430
Provincial Supplements	48.7%	419	74.0%	406	61.8%	401
Occupational Pension Plans and RRSPs *	--	--	23.8%	1,952	21.2%	3,064
Income from All Sources	100.0%	18,185	100.0%	13,153	100.0%	13,249
Post-Tax						
Total of Poor in Category	--		53,000		204,000	
Old Age Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement	--	--	98.7%	8,578	97.5%	8,829
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	--	--	73.7%	3,572	60.8%	3,180
Investments and Savings	--	--	--	--	37.6%	1,644
Provincial Supplements	--	--	80.0%	417	59.5%	384
Occupational Pension Plans and RRSPs *	--	--	--	--	14.5%	3,028
Income from All Sources	--	--	100.0%	12,390	100.0%	12,590

* Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 4.3: SOURCES OF INCOME FOR POOR SENIORS, 1999						
Income Type	Poor Senior Couples		Poor Unattached Senior Men		Poor Unattached Senior Women	
	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)
Pre-Tax						
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Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	76.8%	5,110	81.7%	4,133	72.3%	3,730
Investments and Savings	48.7%	2,035	26.4%	949	43.5%	1,430
Provincial Supplements	48.7%	419	74.0%	406	61.8%	401
Occupational Pension Plans and RRSPs *	--	--	23.8%	1,952	21.2%	3,064
Income from All Sources	100.0%	18,185	100.0%	13,153	100.0%	13,249
Post-Tax						
Total of Poor in Category	--		53,000		204,000	
Old Age Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement	--	--	98.7%	8,578	97.5%	8,829
Canada and Quebec Pension Plans	--	--	73.7%	3,572	60.8%	3,180
Investments and Savings	--	--	--	--	37.6%	1,644
Provincial Supplements	--	--	80.0%	417	59.5%	384
Occupational Pension Plans and RRSPs *	--	--	--	--	14.5%	3,028
Income from All Sources	--	--	100.0%	12,390	100.0%	12,590

* Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small.

The category "provincial supplements" refers to the supplements for low-income seniors given by some provincial governments. It also includes some welfare benefits for seniors in provinces that do not have supplements. The amounts provided by these programs vary greatly from province to province, and the amounts received were modest on average. Nonetheless over 60 percent of senior unattached men and women received provincial supplements as a source of income. Less than 50 percent of poor senior couples had provincial supplements as a source of income.

Less than a quarter of poor seniors had income from occupational pension plans. Poor coverage has been a long-term problem of occupational and other private pension plans. Table 4.3 confirms how very few poor seniors draw on this source of income. For those with coverage, private pension income made a significant contribution to total income, accounting for almost one-quarter of the income of poor unattached senior women using pre-tax measures.

FAMILIES

A different picture emerges when we look at sources of income for poor people under 65. Earned income is often the major source of income, although welfare and employment insurance benefits are also important.

Although earnings were generally low, they were a key source of income in 1999 for all the family types listed in Table 4.4. Using pre-tax measures, more than 50 percent of couples with or without children and single-parent mothers received earnings.

This suggests that for poor families, labour force attachment was lacking in quality or quantity or both. The average pre-tax income of $7,893 earned by poor single-parent mothers, for example, was equivalent to 32.9 weeks of work (40 hours a week) at a rate of $6 an hour or 16.5 weeks of work at $12 an hour. The average of $13,787 earned by poor couples with children is equivalent to 57.5 weeks of work at $6.00 an hour or 28.7 weeks of work at $12.00 an hour. The average earnings of $8,938 for childless couples is equivalent to 37.2 weeks of work at $6.00 per hour.

For families with children, the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) was another significant source of income. As Table 4.4 indicates, virtually all of these families received the CCTB in 1999. In 1999, the maximum benefit was $2,018 for one child for families with incomes under $20,921. Families with two children received a maximum benefit of $2,816. The rates were somewhat different in Quebec and Alberta at the request of the two provincial governments. Payments in Alberta varied with the age of the child while payments in Quebec varied with the age of the child and the number of children in the family. The average amounts received for the three family categories were similar and all over $4,000.

TABLE 4.4: SOURCES OF INCOME OF POOR FAMILIES WITH HEADS UNDER 65, 1999						
Income Type	Poor Single-Parent Mothers		Poor Couples without Children		Poor Couples with Children	
	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)
Pre-Tax						
Total of Poor in Category	295,000		165,000		321,000	
Earnings	54.4%	7,893	58.3%	8,938	83.4%	13,787
Welfare	69.8%	7,632	29.3%	9,028	34.6%	10,127
Employment Insurance	10.6%	4,111	13.8%	4,009	22.6%	4,673
Investments	7.4%	781	34.4%	126	27.5%	1,423
Child Tax Benefit	99.9%	4,122	N/A	N/A	99.1%	4,276
Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	--	--	21.1%	6,401	--	--
Occupational Pension Plans *	--	--	--	--	--	--
Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--	5.8%	5,295
Income from All Sources	100.0%	15,971	100.0%	12,232	100.0%	22,892
Post-Tax						
Total of Poor in Category	236,000		117,000		224,000	
Earnings	46.8%	6,466	53.9%	7,126	78.6%	12,154
Welfare	73.4%	7,571	27.6%	8,382	37.1%	9,852
Employment Insurance	7.7%	4,114	10.2%	4,061	20.3%	4,086
Investments	6.6%	625	36.3%	579	27.5%	808
Child Tax Benefit	99.9%	4,168	N/A	N/A	98.2%	4,260
Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	--	--	22.9%	6,905	--	--
Occupational Pension Plans *	--	--	--	--	--	--
Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--	--	--
Income from All Sources	100.0%	14,754	100.0%	10,411	100.0%	20,576

*Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small. N/A: Non applicable

TABLE 4.4: SOURCES OF INCOME OF POOR FAMILIES WITH HEADS UNDER 65, 1999						
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Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	--	--	21.1%	6,401	--	--
Occupational Pension Plans *	--	--	--	--	--	--
Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--	5.8%	5,295
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Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--	--	--
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*Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small. N/A: Non applicable

For all family types with or without children, welfare benefits emerged as the most significant source of pre-tax income after earnings. At 69.8 percent, poor single-parent mothers were the most likely to depend on welfare payments. In contrast, only 34.6 percent of poor couples with children and 29.3 percent of poor couples without children reported welfare benefits in 1999.

Employment insurance was also a significant source of pre-tax income for families headed by persons under 65. Table 4.4 also shows that single-parent mothers are generally less likely than couples with or without children to receive employment insurance.

Canada and Quebec Pension Plan benefits were claimed by over one fifth of couples without children. The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics does not specify the type of benefit, but the recipients could have been people who received survivor or disability benefits. Similarly, people who got money from occupational pension plans could have received retirement, survivor or disability pensions.

Income received from child or spousal support was not available for 1998 or for 1999. Data for 1997 showed that support payments were an important source of income for poor single-parent mothers. Seventeen percent of these families received support payments in 1997, and the average amount received was $4,167.

TABLE 4.5: SOURCES OF INCOME FOR POOR UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65, 1999				
Income Type	Poor Unattached Women		Poor Unattached Men	
	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)	Percent Who Received (%)	Average Amount to Recipient ($)
Pre-Tax				
Total of Poor in Category	548,000		600,000	
Earnings	53.0%	7,596	61.4%	7,792
Welfare	34.8%	6,289	35.8%	5,822
Employment Insurance	8.2%	2,924	11.0%	3,770
Investments	17.6%	1,245	14.1%	1,089
Child Tax Benefit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	14.0%	5,087	10.6%	5,321
Occupational Pension Plans *	4.3%	4,453	--	--
Workers Compensation	--	--	2.6%	3,096
Income from All Sources	99.9%	8,436	99.8%	8,722
Post-Tax				
Total of Poor in Category	490,000		534,000	
Earnings	50.0%	6,586	58.7%	7,014
Welfare	36.4%	6,329	37.3%	5,701
Employment Insurance	7.7%	2,918	10.1%	3,709
Investments	17.3%	1,210	15.2%	1,400
Child Tax Benefit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	13.3%	4,962	11.3%	5,129
Occupational Pension Plans *	4.0%	4,621	--	--
Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--
Income from All Sources	99.9%	7,717	99.8%	8,068

* Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small. N/A: Non applicable

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Canada & Quebec Pension Plans	13.3%	4,962	11.3%	5,129
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Workers Compensation	--	--	--	--
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* Includes retirement pensions, superannuation, annuities, RRSP received and RRIF and RRSP withdrawals.

-- Sample size too small. N/A: Non applicable

UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65

There is an evident gender gap in the labour force participation of poor unattached men and women. About 61.4 percent of unattached men, relative to 53 percent of unattached women, reported earnings in 1999. There was also a gender earnings gap of $196, in favour of men. About 2.8 percent more unattached men than unattached women are likely to receive employment insurance benefits. In contrast, 17.6 percent of unattached women compared to 14.1 percent of unattached men drew on their investments and savings in the past year.

Among unattached individuals under 65 years of age, women were slightly less likely than men to receive welfare. About 35.8 percent of poor unattached men under 65 compared to 34.8 percent of poor unattached women under 65 reported receiving welfare incomes in 1999. In contrast, employment insurance benefits were reported in 1999 by 11 percent of poor unattached men under 65 and by 8.2 percent of poor unattached women under 65.

Canada and Quebec Pension Plan benefits were claimed by 10.6 percent of poor unattached men under 65 and 14 percent of poor unattached women under 65, using pre-tax measures. As in the case of families, many recipients likely had disability pensions.

While the data in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 are enlightening, they do not give a clear picture of typical combinations of income.

The National Council of Welfare asked Statistics Canada to do special data runs based on different combinations of income: earnings alone, welfare alone, earnings and welfare together, and earnings and EI together. These are found in Table 4.6.

One of the striking features of the table is that families with welfare as their primary source of income had total average incomes several thousand dollars lower than poor families with earnings as their primary source of income. These poorest of the poor families with children were also the families most likely to have seen their federal child benefits clawed back in most provinces and territories. For single-parent mothers, for example, those who received welfare alone had pre-tax incomes from $3,000 to almost $6,000 less than those with other primary sources of income.

Families with both earnings and welfare as primary sources of income also have some of their federal child benefits clawed back. One of the stated purposes of the Canada Child Tax Benefit is to encourage people on welfare to take jobs in the paid labour force. However, a family that receives earnings from a paid job, but also receives welfare income can lose its Canada Child Tax Benefit supplement. To take away the supplement when the family has taken steps to enter or remain in the labour force is contrary to the stated intention of the program.

For poor single parent mothers, poor childless couples and poor unattached individuals under 65, families with earnings and EI as their primary sources of income in 1999 had the highest average incomes. Families with the lowest incomes were those with welfare only as their primary source of income, with the exception of couples without children. The poorest childless couples had earnings as their primary source of income.

TABLE 4.6: AVERAGE INCOME BY PRIMARY SOURCES OF INCOME BY FAMILY TYPE, 1999

Primary Source(s) of Income	Poor Unattached Individuals	Poor Single-Parent Mothers	Poor Single-Parent Fathers	Poor Couples without Children	Poor Couples with Children
Pre-Tax					
EARNINGS (No Welfare or EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	9,484	17,379	14,954	12,364	23,588
Average Earnings ($)	8,477	10,571	8,533	9,385	16,986
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,149	4,269	N/A	4,378
EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (No Welfare)					
Total Average Income ($)	11,027	20,088	--	15,429	23,892
Average Earnings ($)	6,967	9,885	--	10,198	13,157
Average EI ($)	3,415	3,826	--	3,106	4,874
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,724	--	N/A	3,804
EARNINGS AND WELFARE (No EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	9,501	17,666	--	12,527	24,578
Average Earnings ($)	4,380	5,289	--	4,801	7,733
Average Welfare ($)	4,362	6,446	--	5,872	9,730
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,052	--	N/A	4,325
WELFARE (No Earnings or EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	8,218	14,098	15,755	13,513	19,988
Average Welfare ($)	6,955	8,792	10,376	10,939	13,129
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,120	4,509	N/A	4,580
Post-Tax					
EARNINGS (No Welfare or EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	8,616	15,569	14,131	11,354	21,033
Average Earnings ($)	7,511	8,728	7,457	8,209	15,189
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,188	4,478	N/A	4,248
EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (No Welfare)					
Total Average Income ($)	10,068	18,400	--	11,871	21,058
Average Earnings ($)	6,226	6,977	--	6,037	11,596
Average EI ($)	3,298	3,851	--	3,466	4,178
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	5,007	--	N/A	3,611
EARNINGS AND WELFARE (No EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	8,681	16,254	--	8,123	22,743
Average Earnings ($)	3,660	4,397	--	127	5,970
Average Welfare ($)	4,303	5,889	--	5,585	9,258
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,109	--	N/A	4,603
WELFARE (No Earnings or EI)					
Total Average Income ($)	8,025	13,848	13,936	12,289	19,315
Average Welfare ($)	6,839	8,600	8,483	9,853	12,618
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,150	4,602	N/A	4,601

-- Sample size too small.

EI: Employment Insurance

TABLE 4.6: AVERAGE INCOME BY PRIMARY SOURCES OF INCOME BY FAMILY TYPE, 1999					
Primary Source(s) of Income	Poor Unattached Individuals	Poor Single-Parent Mothers	Poor Single-Parent Fathers	Poor Couples without Children	Poor Couples with Children
Pre-Tax					
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Total Average Income ($)	9,484	17,379	14,954	12,364	23,588
Average Earnings ($)	8,477	10,571	8,533	9,385	16,986
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,149	4,269	N/A	4,378
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Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,724	--	N/A	3,804
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Average Earnings ($)	4,380	5,289	--	4,801	7,733
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Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,052	--	N/A	4,325
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Average Welfare ($)	6,839	8,600	8,483	9,853	12,618
Child Benefits ($)	N/A	4,150	4,602	N/A	4,601

-- Sample size too small.

EI: Employment Insurance

V. THE LOW-WAGE POOR

We saw in the previous chapter that the majority of heads of families living in poverty reported earnings in 1999. In this chapter, we refer to such family heads as "the low-wage poor" or "the working poor". Such people are normally in the labour force. Some researchers reserve the term for poor people who have full-time jobs for virtually the entire year. Others include poor people who have strong ties to the labour market regardless of the number of weeks worked or the number of hours of work each week. In this chapter, we look at both categories of the working poor. All the information on the low-wage poor is for individuals and family heads under age 65.

In each of the sections that follow, we profile the working poor by family type in two ways. First, we provide the poverty rates for different family categories among the working poor using bar charts. Second, we show the distribution of poor families and unattached individuals using pie charts. Both pre- and post-tax figures are provided.

WORK ACTIVITY STATUS

Poverty rates vary considerably depending on the work activity of the major income earner. For this purpose, we have used Statistics Canada data for four categories: those employed full time; those employed part time; those with a permanent work limitation due to disability or poor health but who were not completely prevented from working; and those who were able to work but did not.[1] Full time means the person worked at least 49 weeks during the year and the normal work week was 30 hours or more. Part time means the person worked either less than 49 weeks or less than 30 hours a week or both.

Figure 5.1 shows the poverty rates for families and unattached individuals by the work activity status of the major income earner in 1999. It shows that poverty rates increase as the attachment of the major income earner to the labour force weakens and are very high for those with a permanent disability or other work limitation. At the same time, Figure 5.2 indicates that full-year and full-time work was far from a guarantee against being poor. While poverty rates for families with a full-time earner were relatively low in Figure 5.1, these families still made up about a quarter of Canada's 828,000 poor families.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show how families and unattached individuals living in poverty are divided among those with a work limitation, those who did not have paid work, those who worked full-time and those who worked part-time.

[1] The 1999 data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics includes a small fifth category for "full-time/part-time status unknown".

Figure 5.1: Poverty Rates by Work Activity of Major Income Earner, 1999

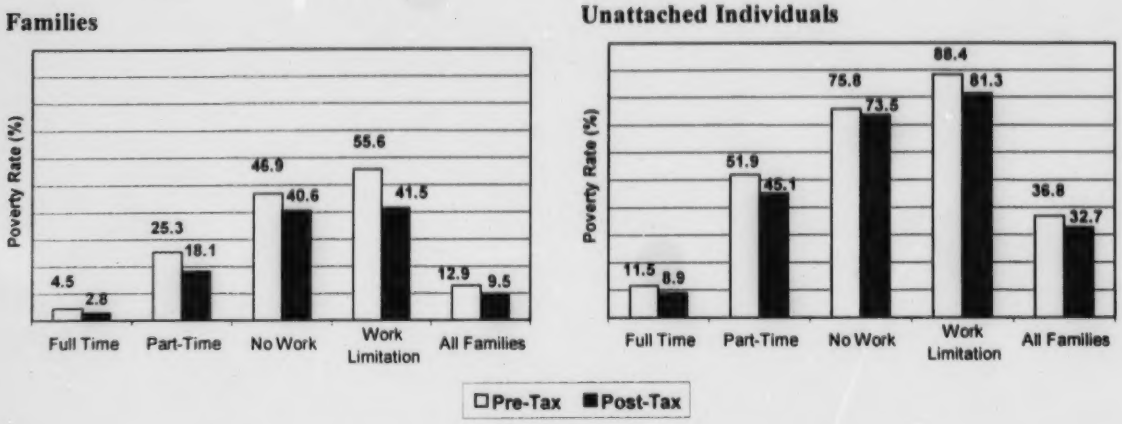


Figure 5.2: Distribution of Poor Families by Work Activity of Major Income Earner, 1999

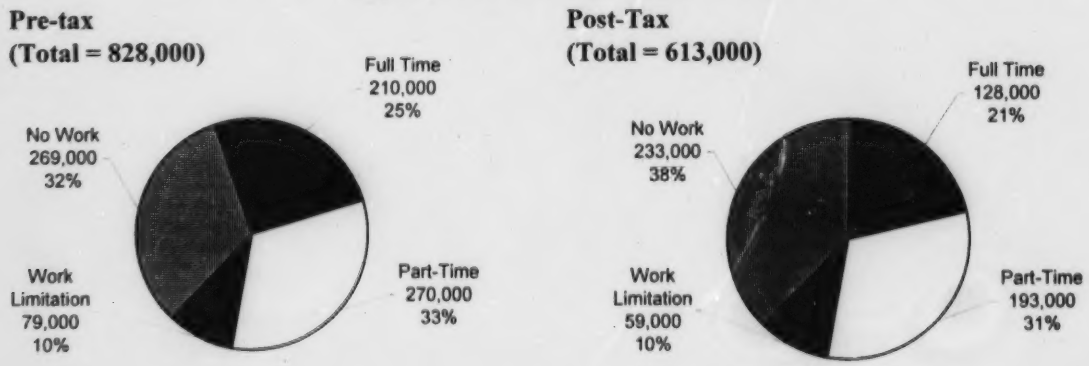
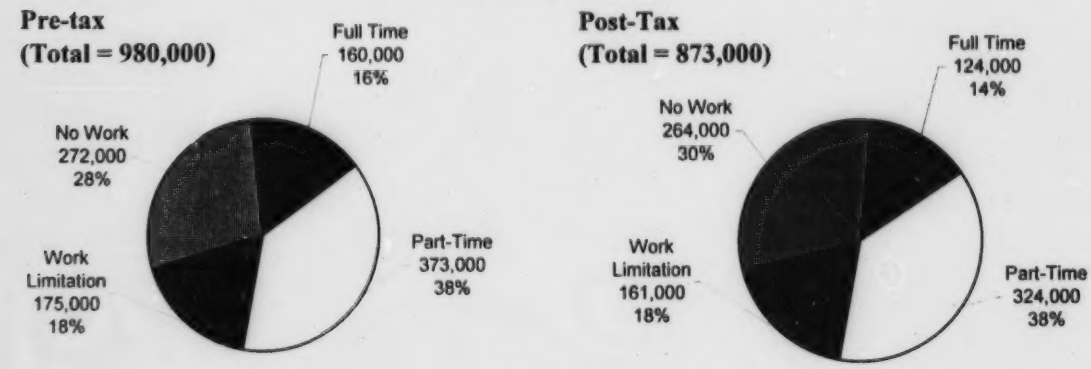


Figure 5.3: Distribution of Poor Unattached Individuals by Work Activity, 1999



For unattached individuals living in poverty, the patterns differed slightly but mostly because a higher proportion of them had low levels of labour force attachment. In 1999, of the 980,000 unattached individuals living under the pre-tax poverty line, just under a fifth worked full-time, almost two-fifths worked part-time, slightly more than a quarter had no work and nearly a fifth experienced work limitation.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MAJOR INCOME EARNER AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

In this section, we investigate how different family types share differently in the risk of poverty, depending on the employment status of family members. For couples, we have broken down employment status into four categories: both major income earner and spouse are employed; major income earner is employed but the spouse is not employed; the spouse is employed but major income earner is not employed; and neither major income earner nor spouse is employed. For single parents, we define employment status as either employed or not employed.

Figure 5.4 confirms that the risk of poverty is lower for families where the major income earner is potentially able to share income generating with a spouse than it is for single parents. Keeping employment status constant, poverty rates were higher among single-parent families headed by women than among couples. The pre-tax poverty rate was 45 percent among single-parent mothers who were employed in 1999. This was about six times the poverty rate of couples with or without children.

Although poverty rates may be lower for households where both spouses were employed, these households accounted for more than 50 percent of poor couples. Single mothers who were employed had very high poverty rates and also constituted more than 60 percent of all poor single mothers.

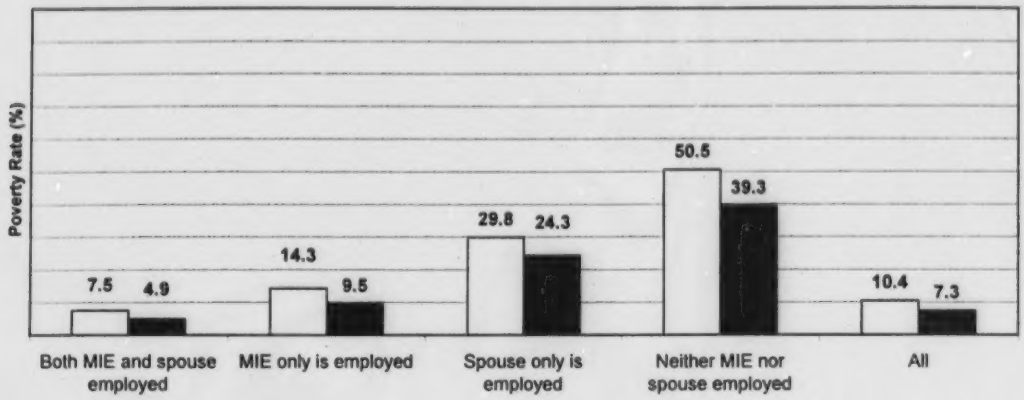
MAIN ACTIVITY OF MAJOR INCOME EARNER

Figures 5.6 and 5.7 offer additional confirmation that strong attachment to the labour force was a key determinant of poverty levels. Out of the 8.4 million families in Canada in 1999, only 7.2 percent of those households where the major income earner worked at either a job or a business lived below the pre-tax poverty line. In contrast, the poverty rate ranged from 36.4 percent among those who were looking for work to 65 percent among those who were caring for other family members.

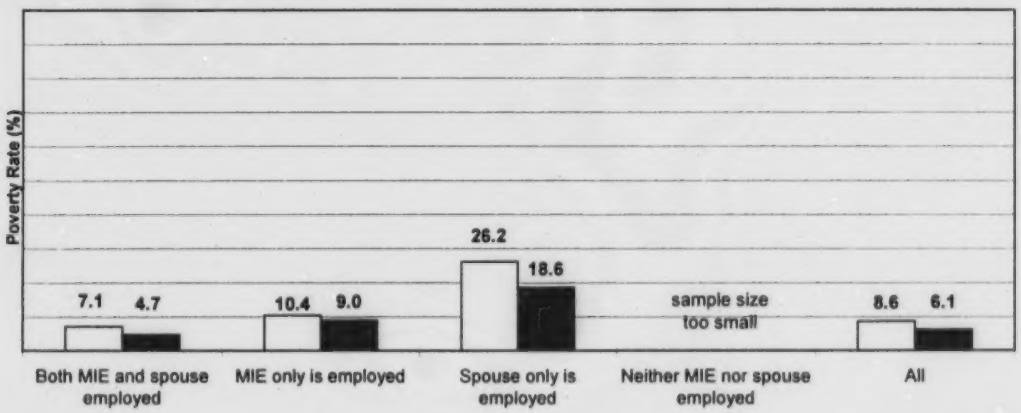
At the same time, Figure 5.7 demonstrates that working at a job or a business is far from an adequate cushion against being poor. For example, more than 40 percent of all poor families were headed by persons who worked at either a job or a business. Families where the major income earner cared for other family members accounted for 10 percent of all families that lived below the pre-tax poverty line.

Figure 5.4: Poverty Rates by Employment Status of Family Members, 1999

Couples with Children



Couples without Children



Single Mothers

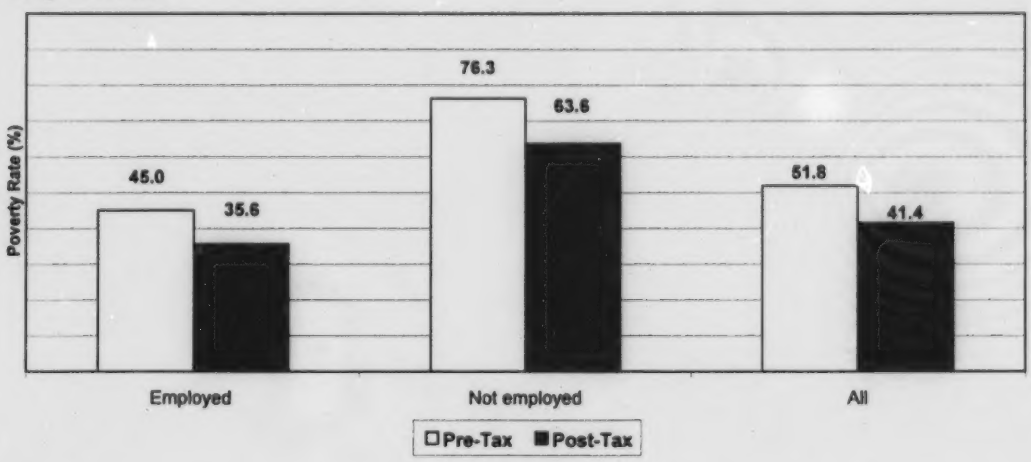


Figure 5.5: Distribution of Poor Families and Single Parents by Employment Status, 1999

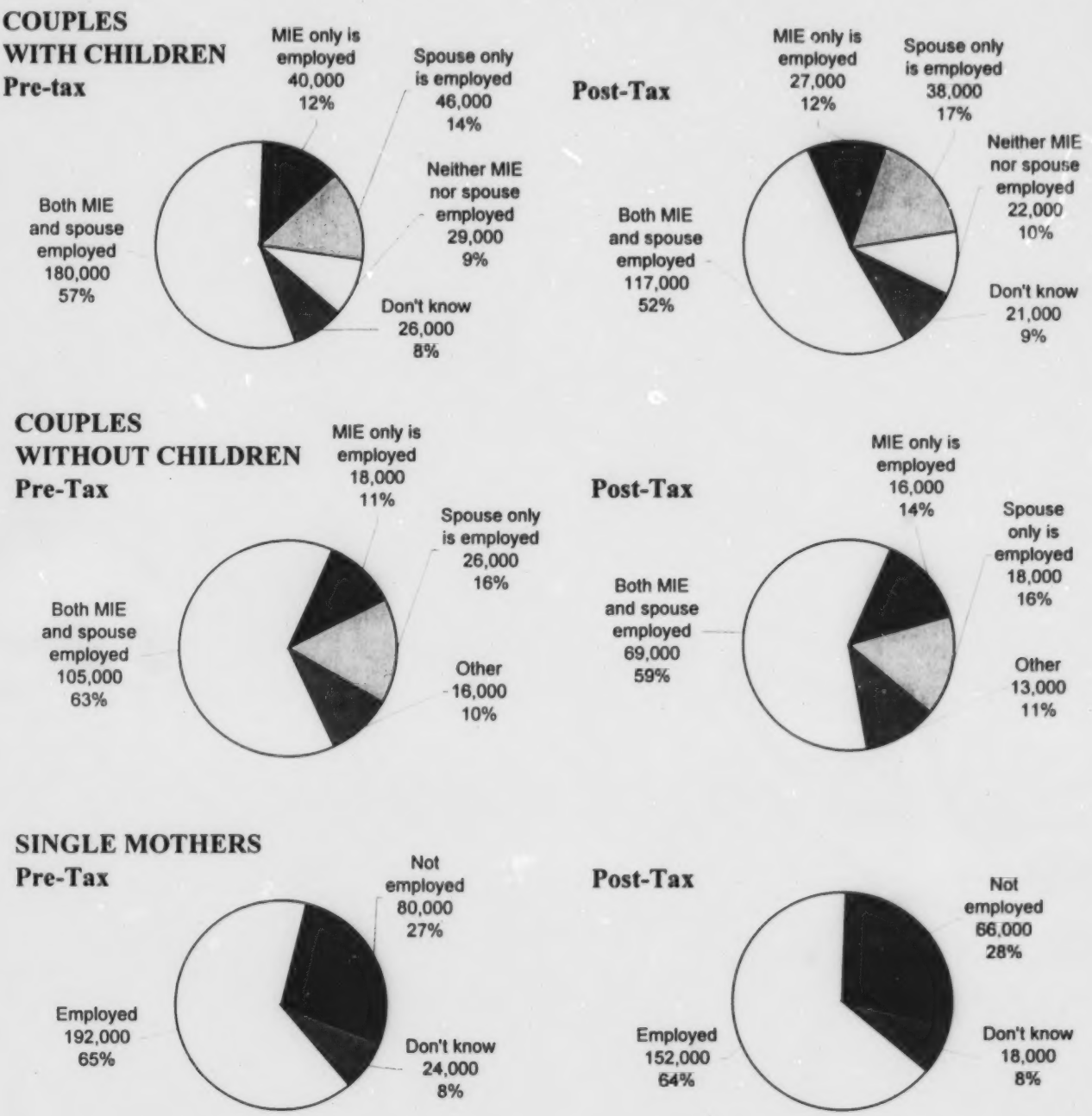

COUPLES WITH CHILDREN
Pre-tax
MIE only is employed 40,000 12%
Spouse only is employed 46,000 14%
Neither MIE nor spouse employed 29,000 9%
Don't know 26,000 8%
Both MIE and spouse employed 180,000 57%
Post-Tax
MIE only is employed 27,000 12%
Spouse only is employed 38,000 17%
Neither MIE nor spouse employed 22,000 10%
Don't know 21,000 9%
Both MIE and spouse employed 117,000 52%
COUPLES WITHOUT CHILDREN
Pre-Tax
MIE only is employed 18,000 11%
Spouse only is employed 26,000 16%
Other 16,000 10%
Both MIE and spouse employed 105,000 63%
Post-Tax
MIE only is employed 16,000 14%
Spouse only is employed 18,000 16%
Other 13,000 11%
Both MIE and spouse employed 69,000 59%
SINGLE MOTHERS
Pre-Tax
Not employed 80,000 27%
Don't know 24,000 8%
Employed 192,000 65%
Post-Tax
Not employed 66,000 28%
Don't know 18,000 8%
Employed 152,000 64%

Figure 5.6: Poverty Rates by Main Economic Activity of Major Income Earner, All Ages, 1999

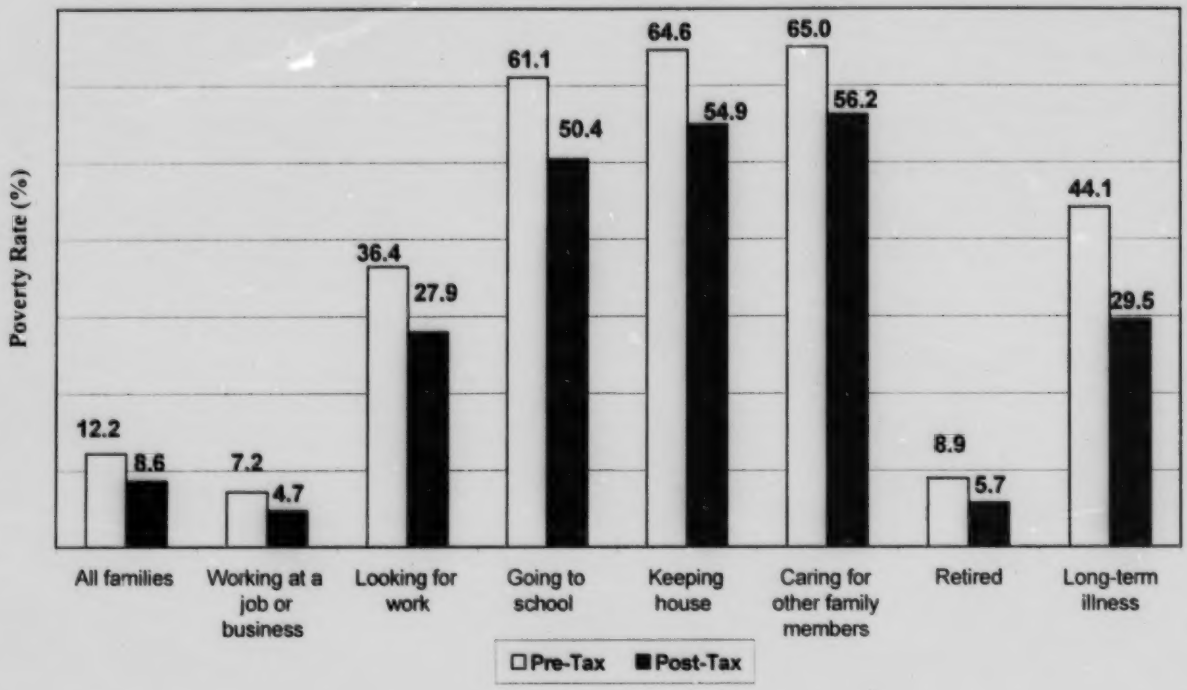
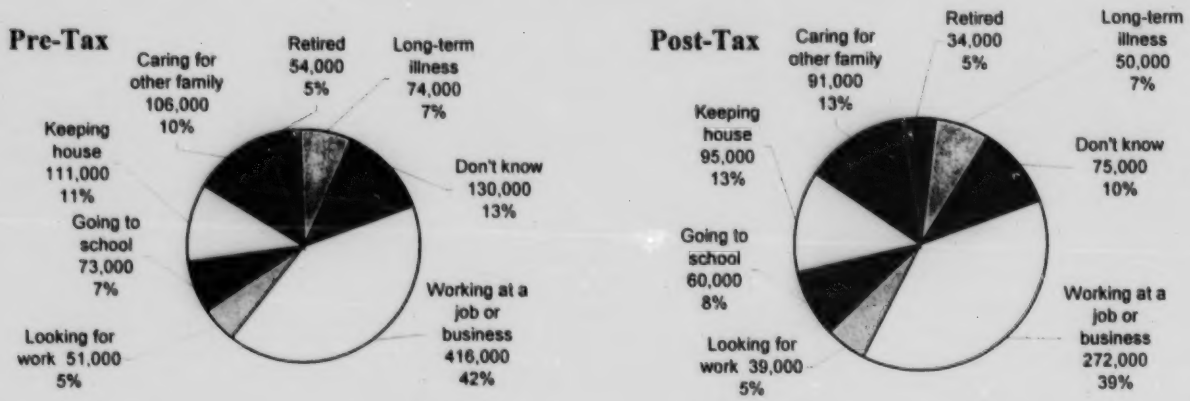


Figure 5.7: Distribution of Poor Families by Main Activity of Major Income Earner, 1999


Pre-Tax
Caring for other family 106,000 10%
Retired 54,000 5%
Long-term illness 74,000 7%
Keeping house 111,000 11%
Don't know 130,000 13%
Going to school 73,000 7%
Looking for work 51,000 5%
Working at a job or business 416,000 42%
Post-Tax
Caring for other family 91,000 13%
Retired 34,000 5%
Long-term illness 50,000 7%
Keeping house 95,000 13%
Don't know 75,000 10%
Going to school 60,000 8%
Looking for work 39,000 5%
Working at a job or business 272,000 39%

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 1999

Poor families and single persons who earn at least half of their total income from employment can also be defined as the "low-wage poor". This definition puts aside the distinction between full-time and part-time work and focuses on poor people who spend a substantial part of the year in paid jobs.

Using this definition, Statistics Canada identified 545,000 poor unattached individuals and 387,000 family heads who made up the low-wage poor using pre-tax poverty lines, and 455,000 unattached individuals and 248,000 family heads using post-tax measures.

Table 5.8 gives the details for different family types. Earnings were the most important source of income for most of the various family types. Using pre-tax figures, 59 percent of poor unattached men, 53 percent of poor unattached women and poor couples without children, and 55 percent of couples with children were working poor. However, only 24 percent of poor single mothers derived at least half of their income from earnings. This finding confirms earlier results—due to parental responsibilities and not having an additional income earner, single parents are less likely to be able to support their families through employment and are more vulnerable to poverty as a result.

The lower part of Table 5.8 shows the average incomes of the low-wage poor and reflects the importance of earnings to the working poor. Although the figures were limited to people with earnings that amounted to at least half of their total income, the last row of the table shows that a much larger portion of total income typically came from earnings for most families living in poverty. Earnings as a percentage of total income ranged from 59 percent to 90 percent using pre-tax measures.

Average earnings for families were substantially higher, especially for couples with children, reflecting larger family size but also suggesting that family heads either received higher wage rates or there was a second earner in the family.

These findings clearly challenge the myth that poor families or unattached people rely excessively on welfare or employment insurance. For most of the families, the average amounts of income aside from earnings were small.

TABLE 5.8: DISTRIBUTION OF POOR FAMILIES AND UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65 WHO EARNED AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1999

	Unattached Men		Unattached Women		Couples without Children		Couples with Children		Single-Parent Mothers	
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax
Number of Poor Family Heads or Unattached Individuals	517,000	458,000	456,000	404,000	146,000	104,000	305,000	212,000	278,000	222,000
Number with Earnings of 50 Percent or More of Total Income	304,000	256,000	241,000	199,000	78,000	49,000	169,000	107,000	66,000	41,000
Percentage with Earnings of 50 Percent or More of Total Income	59%	56%	53%	49%	53%	47%	55%	50%	24%	18%
Average Annual Earnings	$8,932	$8,094	$8,672	$7,579	$9,992	$8,041	$18,059	$16,464	$13,092	$11,385
Average Income from Sources Other than Earnings	$990	$922	$1,078	$1,055	$2,492	$1,794	$6,581	$6,003	$5,775	$5,300
Average Total Income	$9,922	$9,016	$9,750	$8,634	$12,484	$9,835	$24,640	$22,467	$18,867	$16,685
Earnings as a Percentage of Total Income	90%	90%	89%	88%	80%	82%	73%	73%	69%	68%

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VI. DEPTH OF POVERTY AND THE POVERTY GAP

An essential aspect of poverty is its severity. Poverty rates show the proportions of population groups that are poor each year, they do not show the extent of their poverty. Measures of the "depth of poverty" tell us whether people are living in abject poverty or are just a few dollars below the poverty line. In essence, depth of poverty statistics allow us to calculate the "poverty gap"—to show how much additional income would be needed to bring all Canadians out of poverty.

Figure 6.1: Depth of Poverty by Family Type, 1999

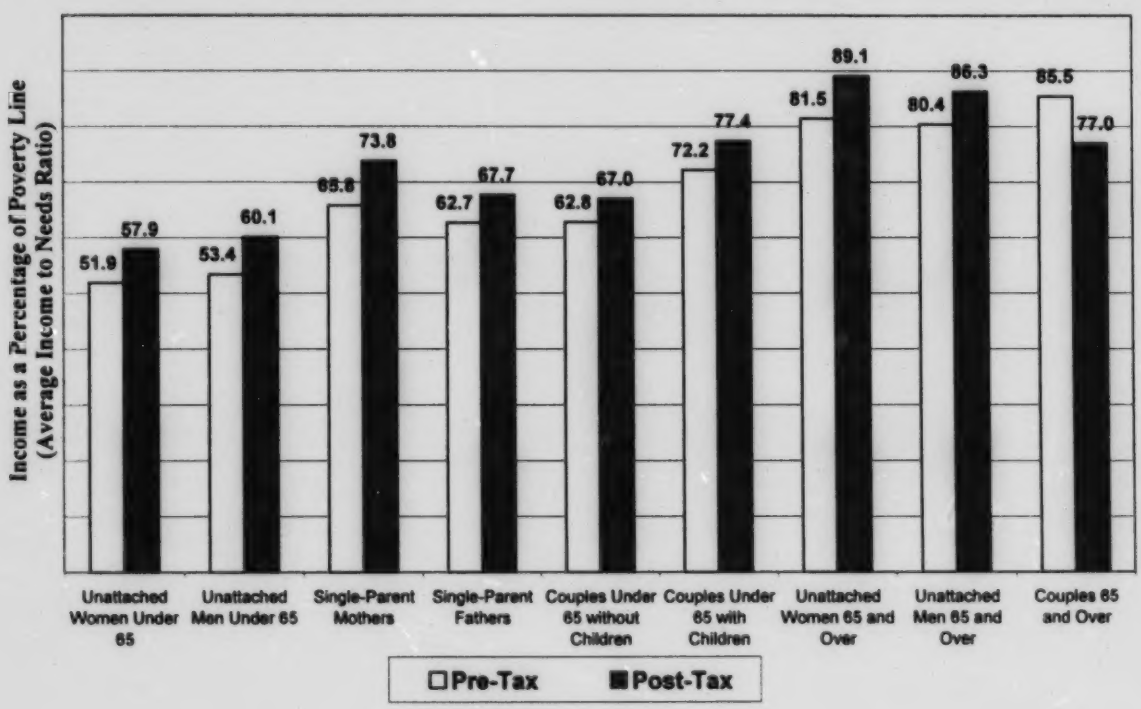

Figure 6.1 shows the average incomes of poor Canadians both before and after taxes as a percentage of the poverty line for the family types that were discussed in previous chapters.

With the exception of senior couples, whose post-tax sample size was too small, all family types were closer to the poverty line using post-tax measures than using pre-tax measures. However, the size of the tax effect varied. Unattached individuals under 65 were the poorest of the family types in 1999, with total pre-tax incomes that were only 51.9 percent of the poverty line on average for women and 53.4 percent on average for men. Unattached senior men and women had relatively high total income as a percentage of the pre-tax poverty line at

80.4 percent for men and 81.5 percent for women. Their income as a percentage of the post-tax poverty line was even better at 86.3 percent for men and 89.1 percent for women.

Depth of poverty can also be expressed in dollars as the difference between the poverty line and the average income of poor families or unattached individuals. Table 6.2 shows the average depth of poverty by family type for 1980, 1998 and 1999, with all figures in 1999 constant dollars to factor out the effects of inflation over the years.

Single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18 had the greatest depth of poverty in 1980 and 1998 in terms of dollars below the poverty line. Their situation improved marginally in 1999, but they remained $8,459 on average below the before-tax poverty line and $5,380 on average below the after-tax poverty line. In 1999, single-parent fathers and couples under 65 with children were deepest in poverty and the situation of single-parent fathers deteriorated between 1998 and 1999. Poor couples under 65 with children under 18 saw their situation deteriorate slightly between 1980 and 1998 with some improvement in 1999.

TABLE 6.2: AVERAGE DEPTH OF POVERTY, BY FAMILY TYPE, IN CONSTANT 1999 DOLLARS

Family Type	Dollars Below Poverty Line			
	in 1980	in 1998	in 1999	
	Pre-Tax		Pre-Tax	Post-Tax
Unattached Women Under 65	$8,024	$7,811	$7,944	$5,715
Unattached Men Under 65	$7,560	$7,568	$7,662	$5,372
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	$9,915	$9,107	$8,459	$5,380
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	$9,245	$8,536	$8,796	$6,319
Couples Under 65 with Children	$9,017	$9,075	$8,691	$5,852
Couples Under 65 without Children	$6,955	$7,146	$7,515	$5,295
Unattached Women 65 and Over	$4,551	$2,962	$3,116	$1,580
Unattached Men 65 and Over	$4,958	$3,645	$3,313	$1,931
Couples 65 and Over	$3,560	$3,446	$3,106	--

-- Sample size too small.

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Couples 65 and Over	$3,560	$3,446	$3,106	--

-- Sample size too small.

Unattached women and men under 65 came next. They had a lower ranking when depth of poverty was expressed as a percentage of the poverty line, but had a different ranking when the measure was dollars below the poverty line. The explanation for this apparent inconsistency is that the poverty lines are higher for families than they are for unattached people. A family of four living in a large city at half the 1999 after-tax poverty line of $28,392 would have been $14,196 below the line, while an unattached person at half the after-tax poverty line of $14,771 would have been $7,385 below the line.

The average poverty gap of unattached men 65 and older was $3,645 in 1998 with a further reduction to $3,313 in 1999, an improvement of $1,645 since 1980. Poor unattached senior women saw a significant improvement between 1980 and 1998 with a deterioration between 1998 and 1999. They were $4,551 below the poverty line in 1980, $2,962 below in 1998 and back up to $3,116 below in 1999. The average income gap for poor unattached seniors was even smaller after taxes were considered.

Senior couples have seen some gradual but marginal improvement in their depth of poverty measures between 1980 and 1999. In 1980 they were $3,560 below the before-tax poverty line. In 1998, they were $3,446 below the poverty line, an improvement of only $114 in 18 years. In 1999, they moved to $3,106 below the before-tax poverty line, a positive change of $340 within one year.

CANADA'S TOTAL POVERTY GAP

Using the average depth of poverty in dollars for different family types and the number of families or unattached individuals in each group, it is possible to calculate Canada's total poverty gap. This gap is the amount of additional income that would be required to bring all Canadians above the poverty line in any given year.

As Table 6.3 shows, the pre-tax poverty gap in 1999 was over $18 billion. Unattached women and men under 65 years of age jointly accounted for 47.9 percent of the gap. Family types with children—single-parent mothers, single-parent fathers and couples with children—jointly accounted for 28.9 percent of the gap. The ranking of these groups changes from year to year, but no other family type comes close to the size of their poverty gaps. Canada's total post-tax poverty gap for 1999 was almost $10.2 billion.

TABLE 6.3: TOTAL POVERTY GAP BY FAMILY TYPE, 1999				
Family Type	Poverty Gap ($)		Family Type's Contribution to Gap (%)	
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax
Unattached Women Under 65	$4,352,000,000	$2,798,000,000	23.1%	27.5%
Unattached Men Under 65	$4,597,000,000	$2,867,000,000	24.4%	28.2%
Single-Parent Mothers Under 65	$2,497,000,000	$1,267,000,000	13.2%	12.5%
Single-Parent Fathers Under 65	$170,000,000	$92,000,000	0.9%	0.9%
Couples Under 65 with Children	$2,793,000,000	$1,313,000,000	14.8%	12.9%
Couples Under 65 without Children	$1,240,000,000	$620,000,000	6.6%	6.1%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	$1,301,000,000	$322,000,000	6.9%	3.2%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	$336,000,000	$102,000,000	1.8%	1.0%
Others	$1,588,000,000	$789,000,000	8.4%	7.8%
Total Poverty Gap	$18,874,000,000	$10,170,000,000	100.0%	100.0%

The post-tax sample size for couples 65 and over is too small to be expressed. Therefore, both pre-tax and post-tax values of this category have been added to the category of 'Others'.

Using pre-tax measures, Canada's poverty gap rose and fell in recent years in much the same way that poverty rates rose and fell as shown in Figure 6.4, using pre-tax measures. All the dollar figures have been expressed in constant 1999 dollars to show the trends with the effects of inflation removed. In 1980, the gap was $13.9 billion. It then rose gradually to $17.1 billion in both 1983 and 1984. The gap declined for five consecutive years until it reached a low of $13.3 billion in 1989. It resumed its ascent again in 1990 in the wake of the 1991/92 recession. Although the economy grew in real per capita terms between 1993 and 1996, the living standards of low-income people actually worsened during this period as the total poverty gap continued an upward mount that peaked at $20.9 billion in 1996. In 1997, after a sustained in a period of economic growth, the poverty gap began to narrow again, with 1999 representing a third year of consecutive decrease. However, the 1999 level still far surpasses the low of $13.3 billion recorded in 1989.

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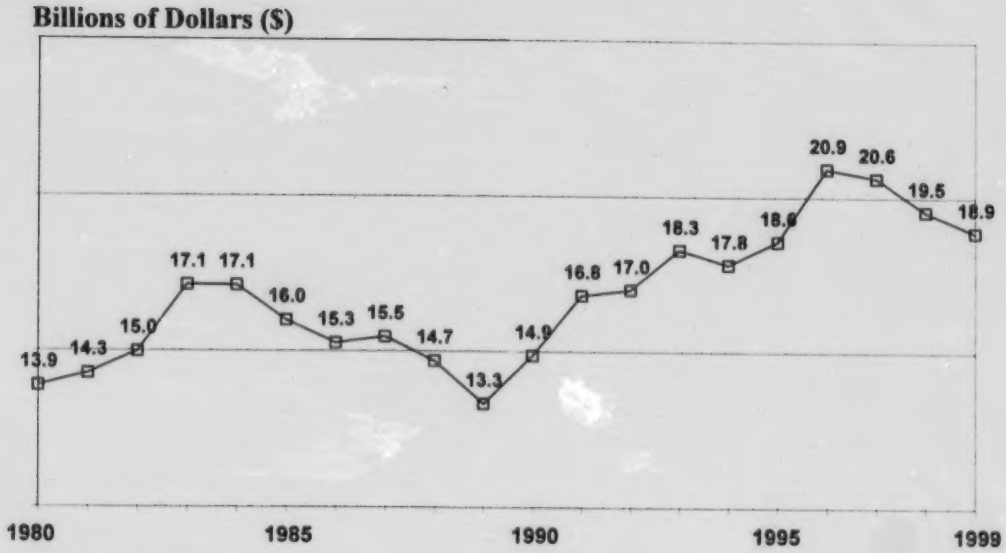
Figure 6.4: Canada's Total Poverty Gap, in Constant 1999 Dollars



INCOME DISTRIBUTION AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POVERTY LINE BY FAMILY TYPE

Another useful way of looking at depth of poverty is to group families and unattached individuals into income categories as percentages of the poverty lines.

UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 present the pre-tax and post-tax income distributions for unattached women and men in 1999. Figures 6.11 and 6.12 contain the pie charts of the distribution of income as a percentage of the poverty line for unattached women and men 65 and over. The charts show that both before and after taxes, more men than women earned incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line. In contrast, women were over-represented among people whose incomes as a proportion of the poverty line are less than 50 percent.

The charts show that in 1999, the poorest of the poor were unattached women and men under 65. There were 254,000 men (14 percent of all unattached men under 65) and 253,000 women (20 percent of all unattached women under 65) whose incomes were less than 50 percent of the poverty line. In order to escape from poverty, both groups would have needed more than double their incomes. Less disadvantaged but still in the ranks of the very poor

were the 204,000 men (11 percent) and 173,000 women (13 percent), whose incomes were between 50 and 75 percent of the poverty line.

Men, at 59 percent, out-ranked women at 50 percent, in terms of the proportion that had incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line. Using post-tax measures, the proportion of both women and men under 65 earning more than 125 percent of the poverty line was larger and the proportion earning less than 75 percent was smaller.

In contrast to the distributions for persons under 65 years of age, very few seniors, especially men, had incomes under 100 percent of poverty line using either pre- or post-tax measures. Figures 6.11 and 6.12 show a significant proportion of seniors fell within 100 to 125 percent of the poverty line.

Using post-tax measures, the incomes of seniors as a percentage of the poverty line were noticeably higher, with an observable gender gap. About 69 percent of unattached senior men and only 51 percent of senior women had post-tax incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line.

Just to get an idea of the impact of modest increases or decreases in income for unattached individuals of all ages, the National Council of Welfare recalculated the 1999 poverty statistics according to hypothetical best-case and worst-case scenarios.

In the best-case scenario, we assumed that all poor unattached individuals with incomes between 75 and 100 percent of the poverty line got enough additional income in 1999 to put them over the poverty line. Using pre-tax rates, the number of poor unattached individuals would have dropped from 1,667,000 to 1,314,000 under this scenario, and the poverty rate would have fallen from 39 percent to 24 percent.

In the worst-case scenario, we assumed that all "near poor" unattached persons with incomes of 100 to 125 percent of the poverty line lost enough income in 1999 to fall into poverty. The number of poor unattached individuals would have risen from 1,667,000 to 2,125,000 under this scenario, and the poverty rate would have shot up from 39 percent to 51 percent. In the best-case post-tax scenario, the poverty rate would have fallen from 28 percent to 17 percent and in the worst case, would have risen to 40 percent.

FAMILIES

Figures 6.7 to 6.10 and 6.13 present the same kind of income distributions for families. Whether one looks at pre-tax or at post-tax figures, the differences between single-earner families and dual-earner families and the impact of gender are striking.

The vast majority of two-parent families with children (82 percent) had incomes of more than 125 percent of the poverty line. In sharp contrast, only 36 percent of families headed by single-parent mothers had incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line and over a

third of single-parent mothers had very low incomes at 75 percent of the poverty line or worse.

Using post-tax measures, the proportions of families with children with incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line was higher for all the three groups. However, more than 80 percent of couples with children, compared to only 48 percent of single-parent mothers, had incomes greater than 125 percent of the poverty line.

Couples under 65 without children fared better than families with children in terms of income as a percentage of the pre-tax poverty line. About 88 percent of couples under 65 without children had incomes in excess of 125 percent of the pre-tax poverty line compared to 83 percent for couples with children. Using post-tax measures, over 90 percent of senior and non-senior couples without children had incomes of more than 125 percent of the poverty line.

Under a hypothetical best-case scenario, all the families at 75 to 100 percent of the pre-tax poverty line would get additional income and move out of poverty. The number of poor families would drop from 1,025,000 to 562,000 in 1999 and the pre-tax poverty rate for families would fall from 12 percent to7 percent. Under a worst-case scenario, the families at 100 to 125 percent of the poverty line would fall into poverty. The number of poor families would rise from 1,025,000 to 1,636,000, and the poverty rate would go up from 12 percent to 20 percent. In the best case post-tax scenario, the poverty rate would drop from about 8 percent to 4 percent and in the worst case scenario, would rise to 14 percent.

Figure 6.5: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Unattached Women Under 65, 1999

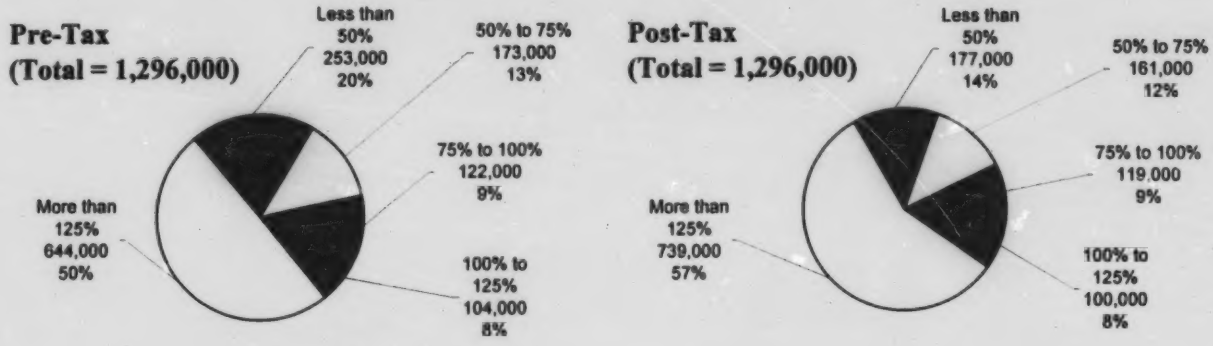


Figure 6.6: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Unattached Men Under 65, 1999

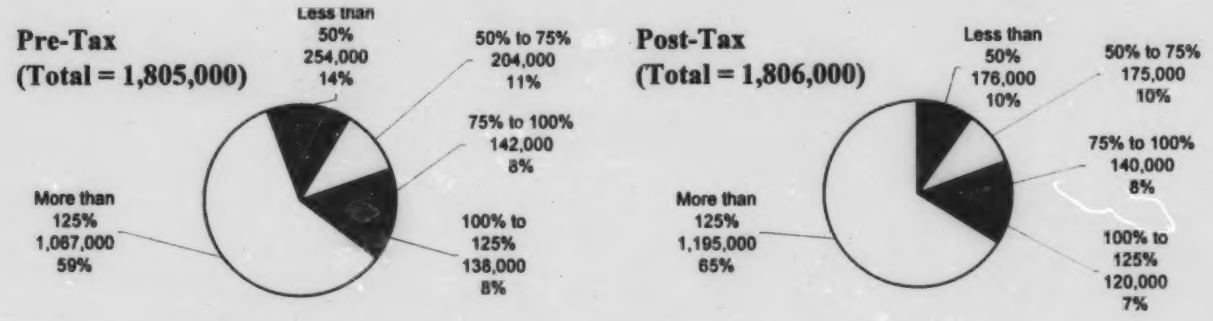


Figure 6.7: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Single-Parent Mothers, 1999

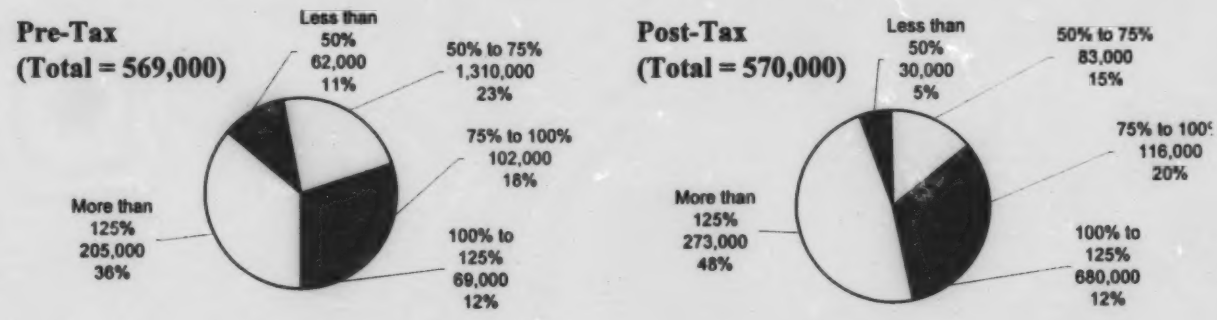


Figure 6.8: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Single-Parent Fathers, 1999

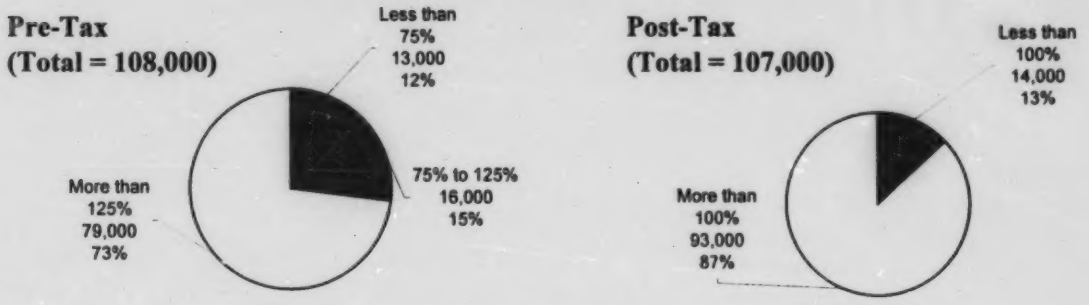


Figure 6.9: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Couples Under 65 without Children, 1999

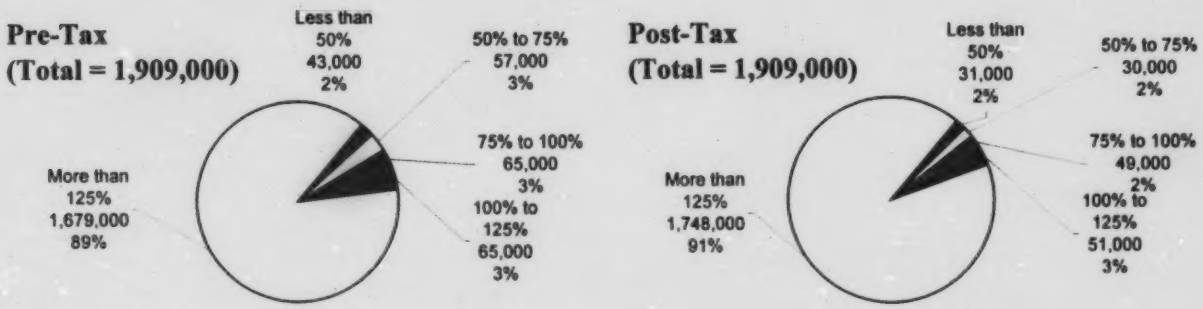


Figure 6.10: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Couples Under 65 with Children, 1999

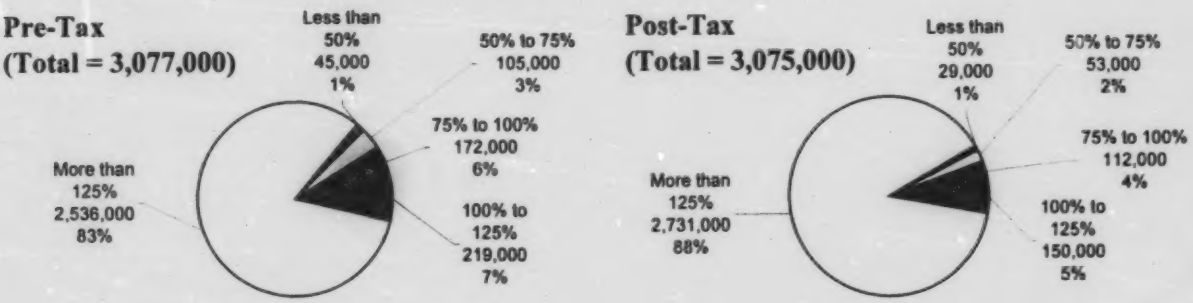


Figure 6.11: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Unattached Women 65 and Over, 1999

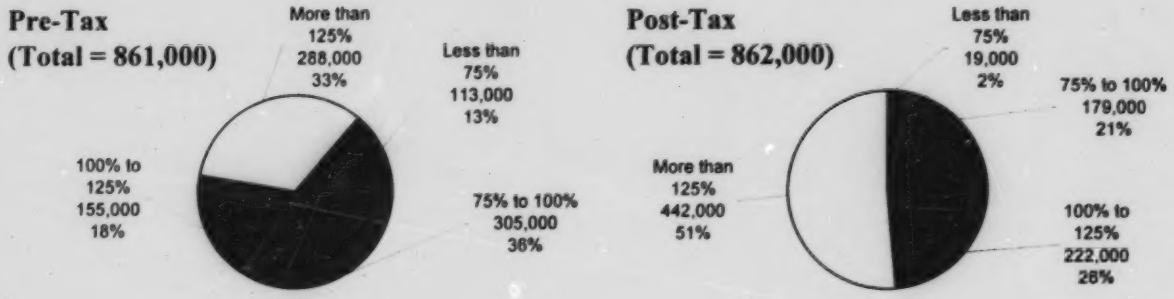


Figure 6.12: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Unattached Men 65 and Over, 1999

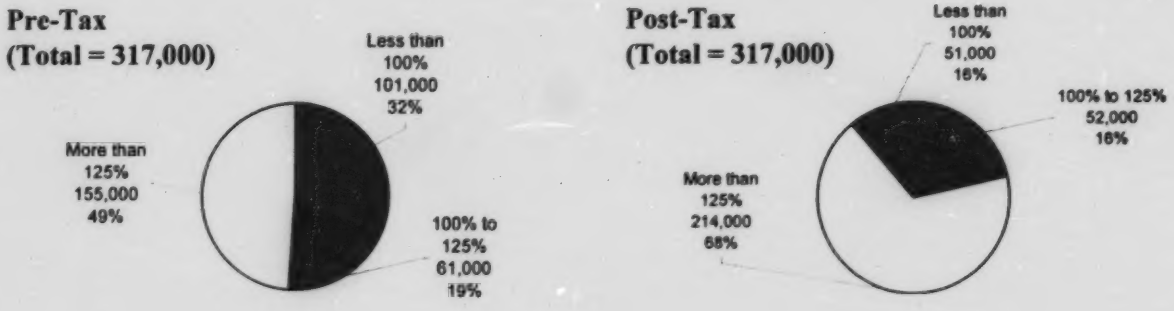
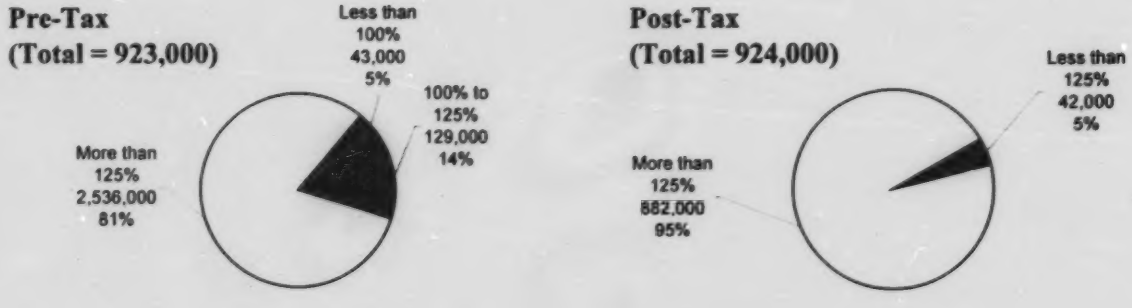


Figure 6.13: Income Distributions as Percentages of Poverty Line for Couples 65 and Over, 1999



PEOPLE LIVING AT LESS THAN HALF OF THE POVERTY LINE

The National Council of Welfare has long been alarmed about the number of people who were living at less than half the poverty line and we were dismayed to see the numbers go up in the years following the 1990-1991 recession despite the continuing overall improvements in the economy. Figures 6.14 to 6.17 highlight the patterns of abject poverty from 1989 through 1999 using pre-tax poverty lines.

There were some notable improvements between 1998 and 1999 particularly among families with children. The number of single-parent mothers living below 50 percent of the poverty line decreased from 79,000 in 1998 to 62,000 in 1999. The Council was also pleased to observe that the number of couples under 65 with children declined to a record low of 45,000—the lowest number since 1989 when 46,000 couples with children lived at less than 50 percent of the poverty line. Similarly, the Council is encouraged that the number of poor unattached individuals under 65 living in abject poverty dropped from 520,000 persons in 1998 to 506,000 in 1999.

The 62,000 single-parent mothers living at less than 50 percent of the poverty line in 1999 represents the second lowest number recorded since 1989. But there were still 10,000 more families living in extreme poverty in 1999 than a decade earlier.

The number of unattached individuals with incomes less than 50 percent of the poverty line also presents a bleak picture. There was a small decrease since 1998, but the number of extremely poor unattached people in 1999 was still very high at 506,000. This is over 150 percent of the 1990 low of 307,000. In 1999, there were still about 200,000 more unattached persons below 50 percent of the poverty line than at the start of the decade.

In the case of couples without children, the number went up by 9,000 from 34,000 in 1998 to 43,000 in 1999. In contrast, for couples under 65 with children the number of poor families living under 50 percent of the poverty line went down from 56,000 in 1998 to 45,000 in 1999.

These figures provide the definitive rebuttal to people who believe that poverty is not a problem in Canada. People who live at less than half the poverty line are poor by any reasonable standard. It is tragic to think of so many people living in abject poverty, and it is appalling to see the figures remain at high levels as the economy continues to improve. The National Council of Welfare believes this is a problem of the highest magnitude that cries out for an immediate response from governments.

Figure 6.14: Number of Single-Parent Mothers, Under 50% of Poverty Line

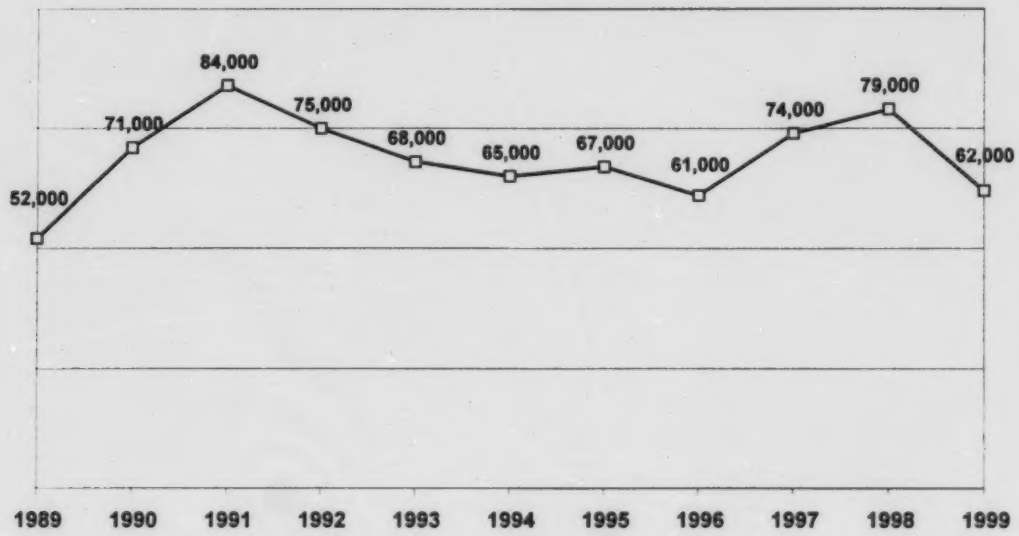


Figure 6.15: Number of Unattached Individuals Under 65, Under 50% of Poverty Line

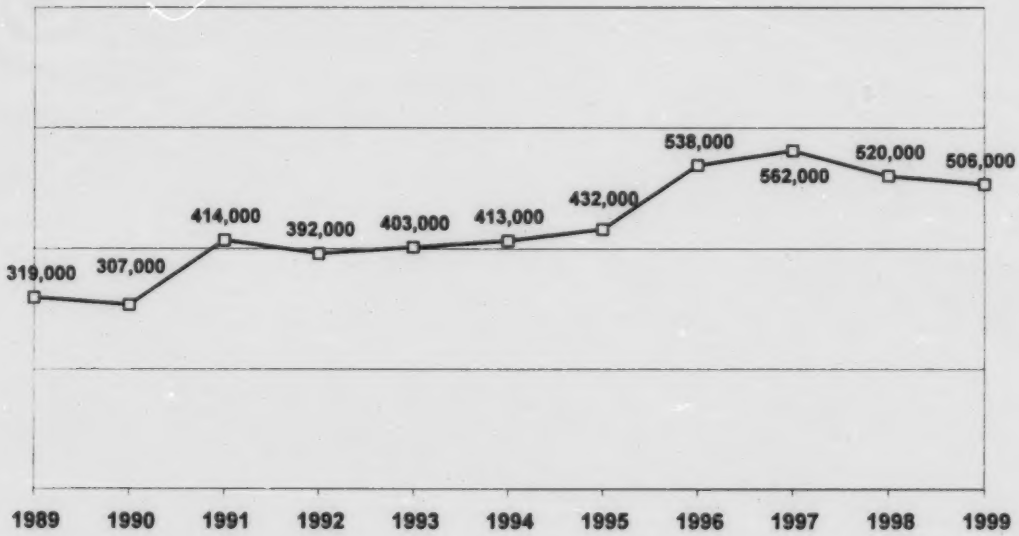


Figure 6.16: Number of Couples Under 65 without Children, Under 50% of Poverty Line

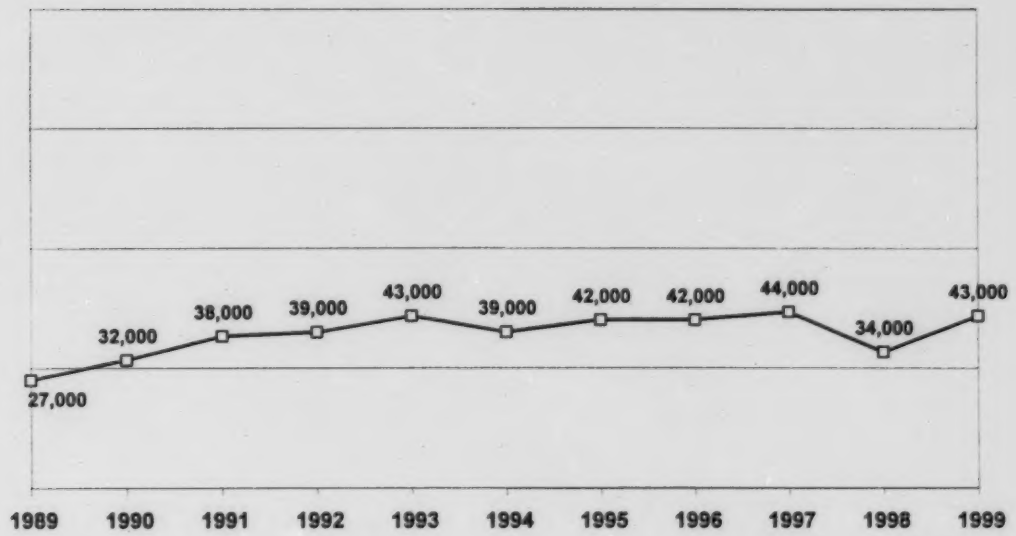
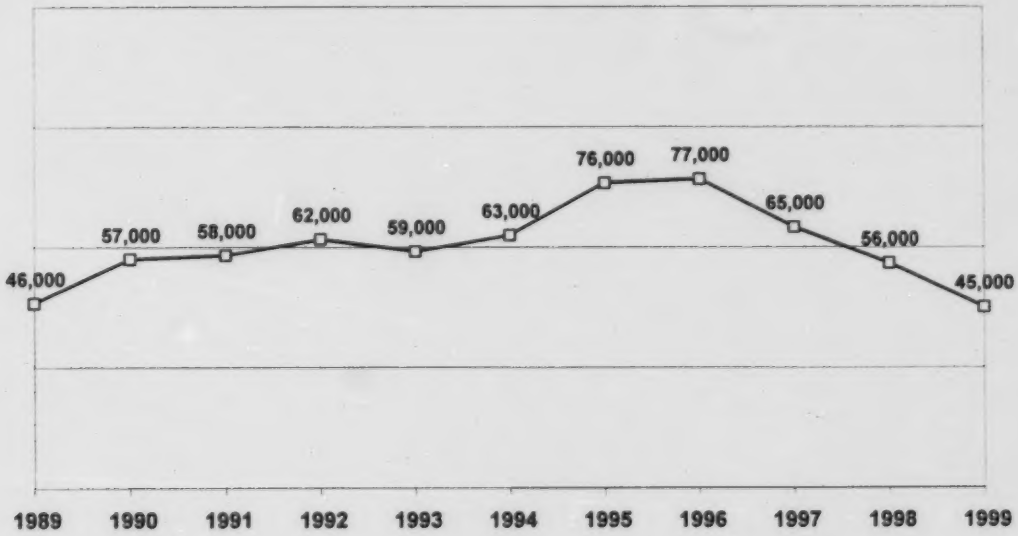


Figure 6.17: Number of Couples Under 65 with Children, Under 50% of Poverty Line



VII. DURATION OF POVERTY

In 1993, when Statistics Canada started a longitudinal study, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), it opened up a new way of understanding poverty. Rather than only measuring poverty rates on an annual basis, SLID follows the same set of people for six consecutive years and is designed to capture changes in the economic well-being of individuals and families over time. Data from SLID enable researchers to see how people's financial circumstances changed from year to year.

In this chapter, we examine data collected during the first six-year cycle of SLID which began in 1993 and ended in 1998, using pre-tax and post-tax measures. Long-term poverty rates are presented by family type, education, age, sex, immigration status, visible minority status and work limitation status in Canada. We also investigate the effect of changes in family status on poverty.

It is clear from the charts (and tables presented at the end of the Chapter) that over the long-term, poverty touches a greater number of families and individuals than yearly poverty rates suggest. More than seven million or 29.5 percent of all Canadians had experienced poverty in at least one of the six years between 1993 and 1998. Using the post-tax measure, the number is somewhat lower but at 24.2 percent is still almost one quarter of all Canadians[1].

Our analysis shows that the risk of being poor varies with age and sex, with the number of potential income earners, with the number of children, with visible minority, immigration or Aboriginal status and with work limitation status. Simply put, the risk of being poor is higher when the head of the family is single or unattached, is a woman, is a parent, lives with a disability, is a member of a visible minority, is an Aboriginal person or immigrated to Canada after 1979.

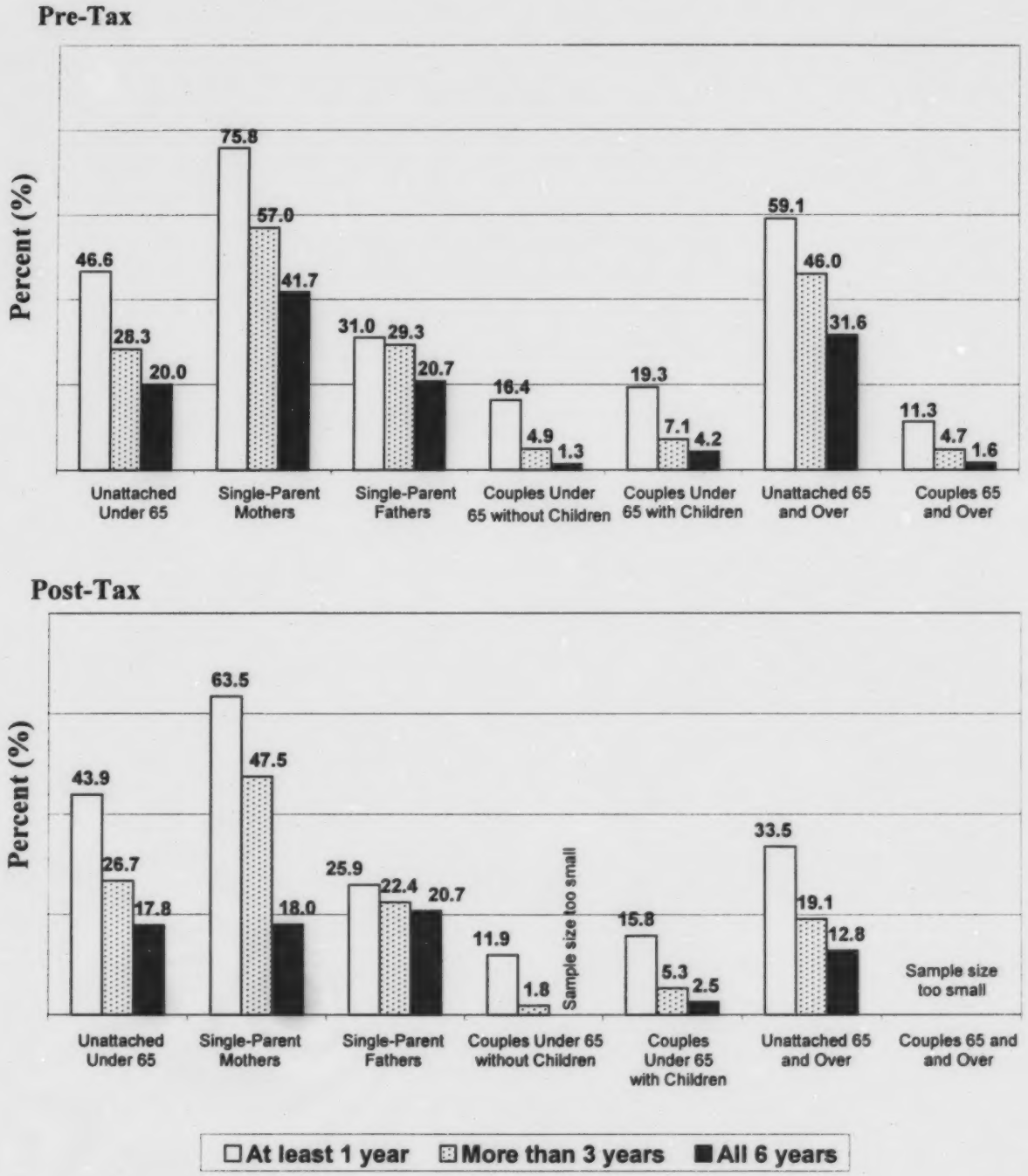
DURATION OF POVERTY BY FAMILY COMPOSITION

Female lone parents exemplify the generality that the risk of being poor increases with being single, with being a parent and with being a woman (Figure 7.1). Previous chapters have shown that families headed by single mothers under 65 years of age have the highest yearly poverty rate of all family types. In any given year between 1993 and 1998, no less than 52.9 percent of single mothers experienced poverty.

Over the long-term, single mothers remained those most likely to experience poverty. Before taxes, a staggering 75.8 percent of single-parent mothers lived in poverty for at least one of the six years, compared to 51.2 percent of unattached persons, 14.4 percent of couples without children and 19.3 percent of couples with children. Using post-tax income, the proportion of single mothers who lived below the poverty line for at least one year was 63.5 percent.

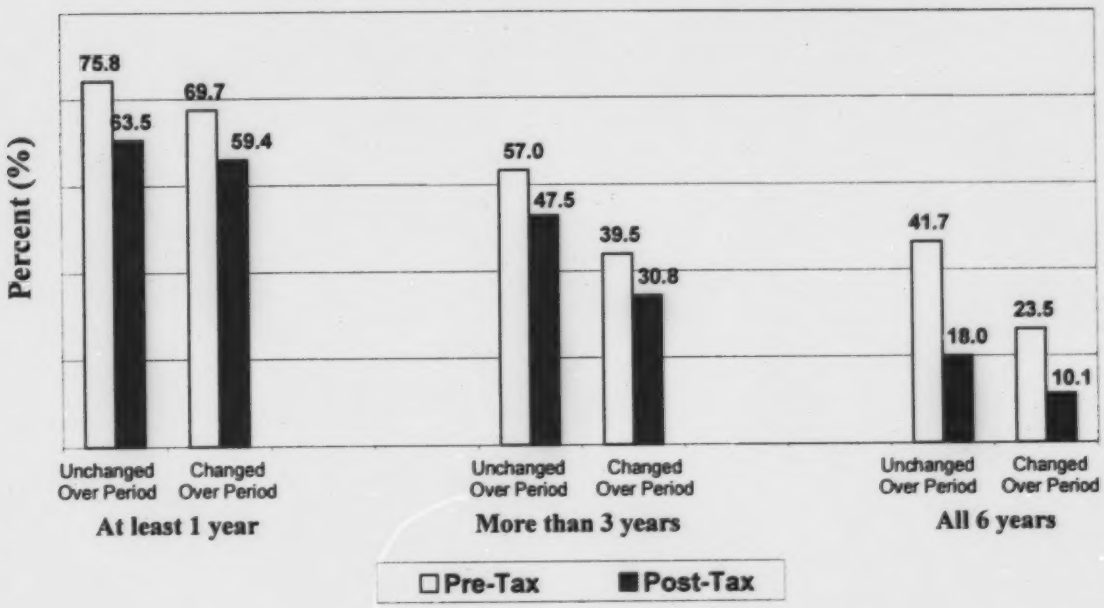
[1] See also Cotton, Cathy; Giles, Philip and Lathe, Heather, Statistics Canada: "1999 Income: An Overview", *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 2001).

Figure 7.1: Duration of Poverty by Family Types, 1993-1998



Available transitional data indicate that being in a couple reduces the risk of poverty (Figures 7.2 to 7.7 and Table 7.14). Before taxes, 69.7 percent of women who were lone mothers in 1993, but whose marital status changed during the six-year period (for example, they became part of a couple), experienced poverty at least once between 1993 and 1998. This is 6.1 percent less than the 75.8 percent of poor lone mothers whose household status remained the same throughout the period.

Figure 7.2: Duration of Poverty for Single-Parent Mothers, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998



Long-term poverty rates decreased for unattached persons but increased for couples whose marital status changed during the period. Whereas the poverty rate was 51.2 percent for persons who remained consistently single throughout the survey, it was 49.9 percent for persons who started out as single but whose status later changed. In the reverse, poverty rates were higher for couples whose household composition changed during the survey cycle (there may have been a divorce or children may have come into or left the household) than for couples whose family composition remained the same.

Figure 7.3: Duration of Poverty for Couples Under 65 with Children, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998

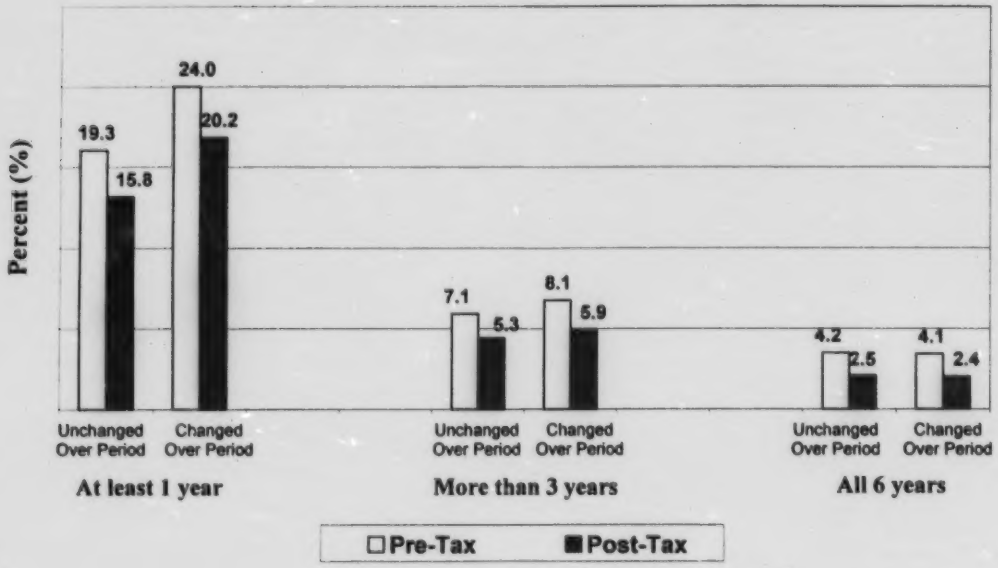


Figure 7.4: Duration of Poverty for Couples Under 65 without Children, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998

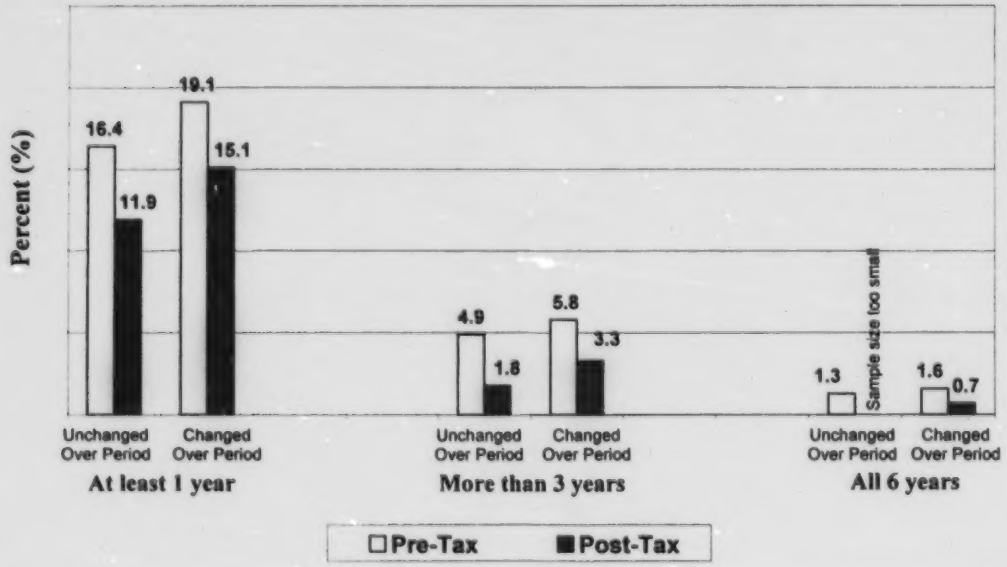


Figure 7.5: Duration of Poverty for Couples 65 and Over, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998

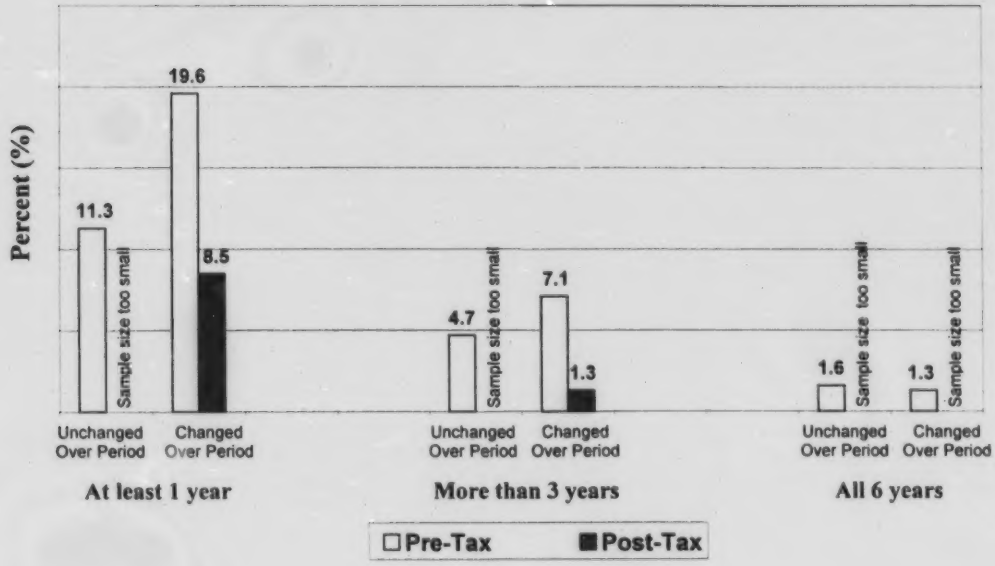


Figure 7.6: Duration of Poverty for Unattached Individuals Under 65, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998

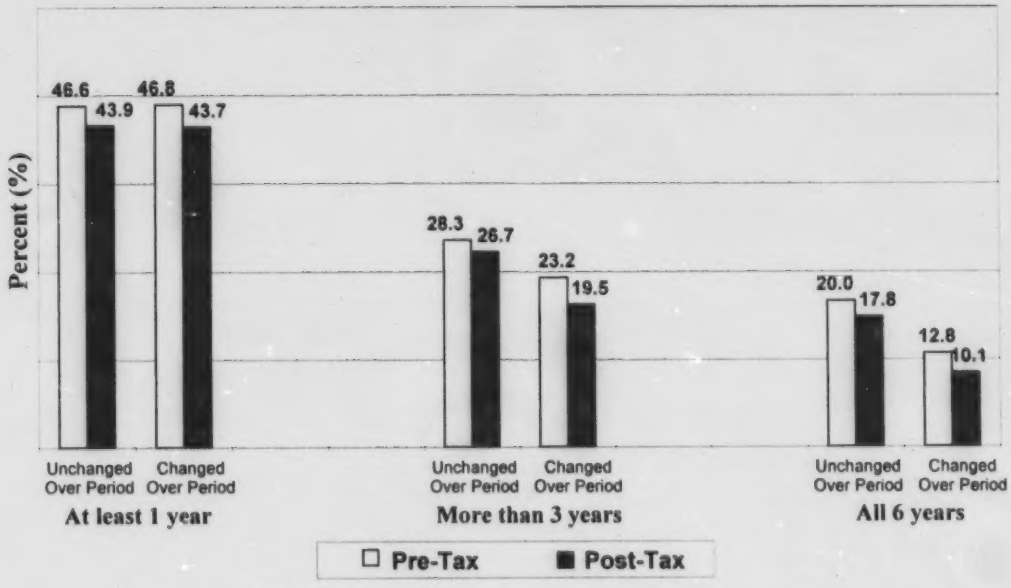
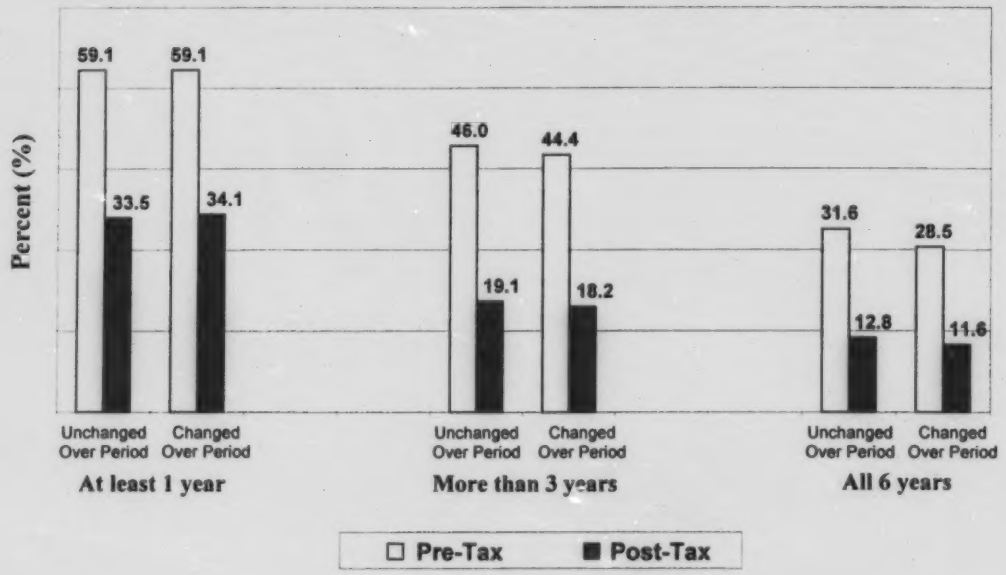


Figure 7.7: Duration of Poverty for Unattached Individuals 65 and Over, by Change in Marital Status, 1993-1998



DURATION BY AGE AND SEX

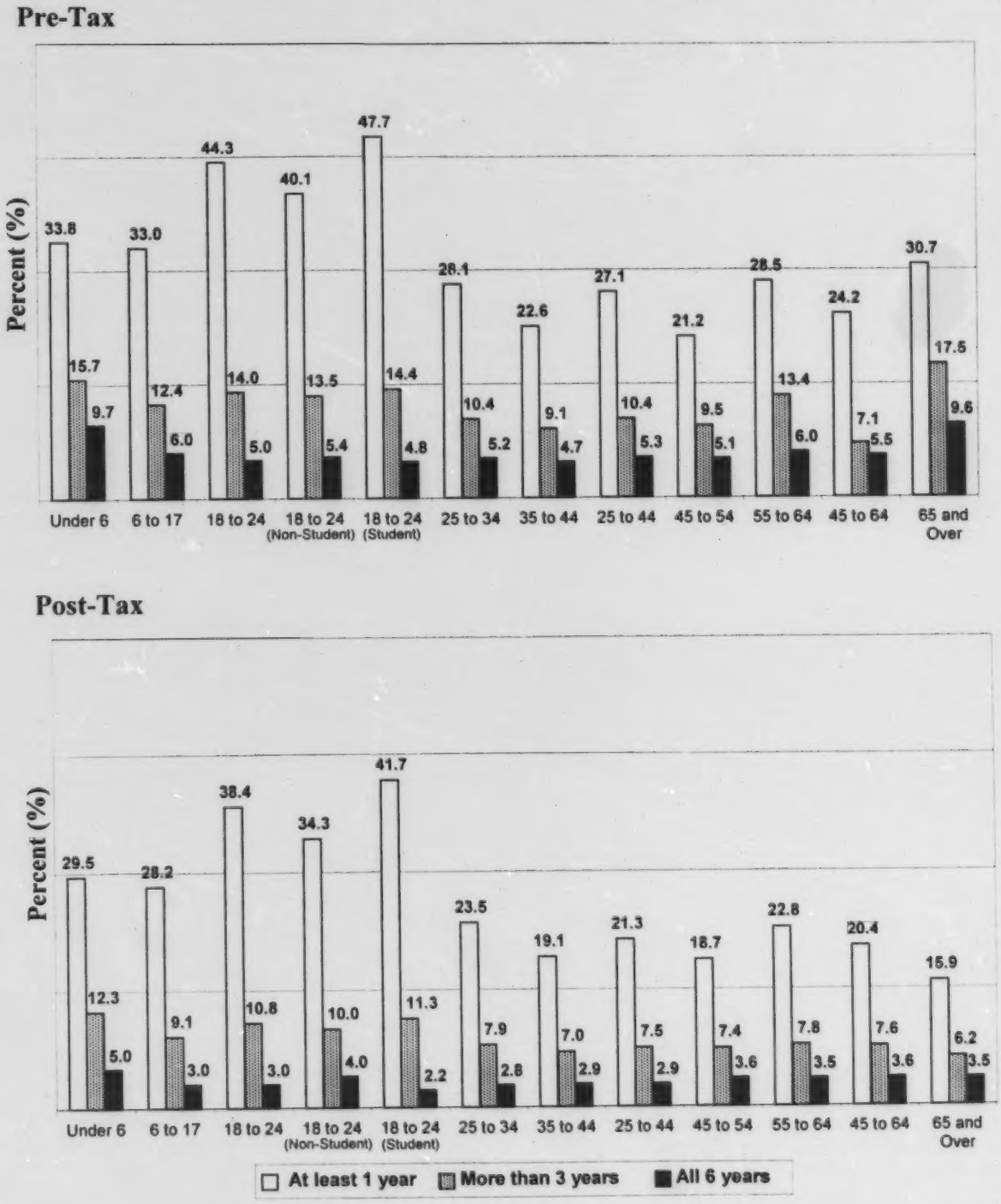
The risk of being poor varies with age but in a non-linear fashion. Using pre-tax income poverty lines, persons aged 18 to 24 years, seniors and children under 18 years of age (especially children under six years of age) are more likely than other age groups to have experienced poverty at least once in six years. In almost every adult age group, a greater percentage of women than men experience poverty at least once and for long durations. (See Table 7.16 for details.)

For children under six years of age, poverty tends to be a long-term experience. The National Council of Welfare considers it a tragedy that children aged less than six years were the most likely of all age groups to have lived in poverty for all of the six years of the survey.

More than for any other group, post-tax measures are dramatically lower that pre-tax measures among seniors. As Figure 7.8 shows, after taxes, the proportion of seniors exposed to poverty in at least one of the six years was 15.9 percent, practically halved from 30.7 percent before taxes. In contrast, after taxes, the proportion of children who experienced poverty at least once differed little (33.2 percent pre-tax and 29.5 percent post-tax).

Among persons of working age, women between the age of 18 and 24 or aged 65 or over were more likely than men in the same age category to have experienced poverty in at least one of the six years and to have lived in poverty for four years or longer (Table 7.16).

Figure 7.8: Duration of Poverty by Age, 1993-1998



For persons aged 18 to 24 years, poverty tends to be a transitional, short-term phenomenon. Whereas 44.3 percent of all young adults experienced poverty at least once, a much smaller 14.4 percent lived in poverty for four years or longer and only 4.8 percent lived in poverty from 1993 through 1998 (pre-tax). Many persons aged 18 to 24 years are post-secondary students. Results from a baseline survey which Ekos Research Associates conducted on behalf of the Canadian Millenium Scholarship Foundation[2] show that post-secondary students are facing severe financial problems: not only are summer jobs hard to find, summer earnings are too low to pay for increasing tuition and parental assistance is not always adequate. The situation Ekos unveiled was one of mounting credit card debt (which does not help the poverty rate) and low levels of financial aid.

DURATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND SEX

Persons whose education status changed and persons with less than either a non-university certificate or university degree had relatively high rates of poverty, with poverty generally more pronounced for women. For persons whose education status changed, increased poverty rates could be due to a number of factors. For example, if a person entered a university program with high fees and time demands, their financial situation may worsen temporarily even though, long-term, they will likely be at low risk of poverty. The higher the level of education, the lower the poverty rates. (See Table 7.17 for further detail.)

Table 7.17 also provides specific information for 18-24 year olds. Within this age group, women and students were more likely than men and non-students to have experienced poverty at least once and to have lived in it for four years or longer.

DURATION BY WORK LIMITATION, IMMIGRATION STATUS, MINORITY STATUS

People without any disability from 1993 through 1998 were more likely than either people with a temporary disability[3] or people with a permanent disability to live above the poverty line for all of the six years.[4] This finding is consistent with short-term data showing that persons living with disabilities are among groups most at risk of becoming poor[5]. For example, based on pre-tax poverty lines, 23 percent of persons without disability compared to

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[2] See *Student Financial Survey: Baseline Results* Canada Millenium Scholarship Foundation Research Series (November, 2001).

Also see Looker, Diane; Lowe, Graham S., sponsored by the Canadian Millenium Scholarship Foundation, *Post-Secondary Access and Student Financial Aid in Canada: Current Knowledge and Research Gaps,* Background Paper for a Canadian Policy Research Networks Workshop on Post-Secondary Access and Student Financial Aid (February 2001).

[3] Here, people with a temporary disability are those who had some work limitation between 1993 and 1998.

[4] In this study, people with a permanent disability are those who had a work limitation for all of the years from 1993 through 1998.

[5] Canadian Council on Social Development's *Disability Information Sheet* No. 3, 2001:6.

35.8 percent of persons with a temporary disability and 55.2 percent of persons with a permanent disability were exposed to poverty at least once during the six years. Similarly, 3.2 percent of persons without disability compared to 7.3 percent of persons with a temporary disability and 21.3 percent of persons with a permanent disability lived in poverty for all of the six years.

Figure 7.9: Duration of Poverty by Sex and Education (High School), 1993-1998

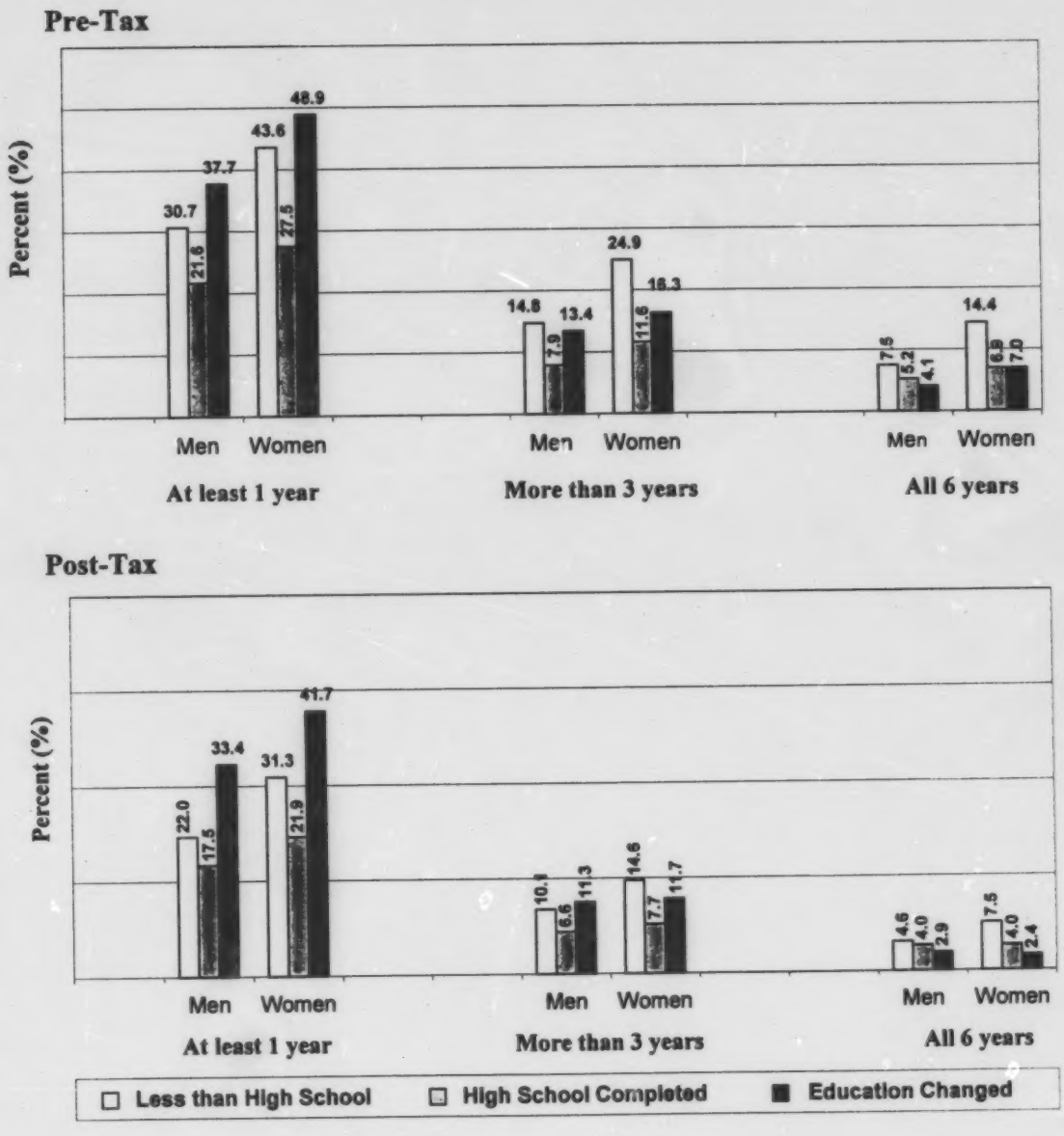


Figure 7.10: Duration of Poverty by Sex and Education (Greater than High School), 1993-1998

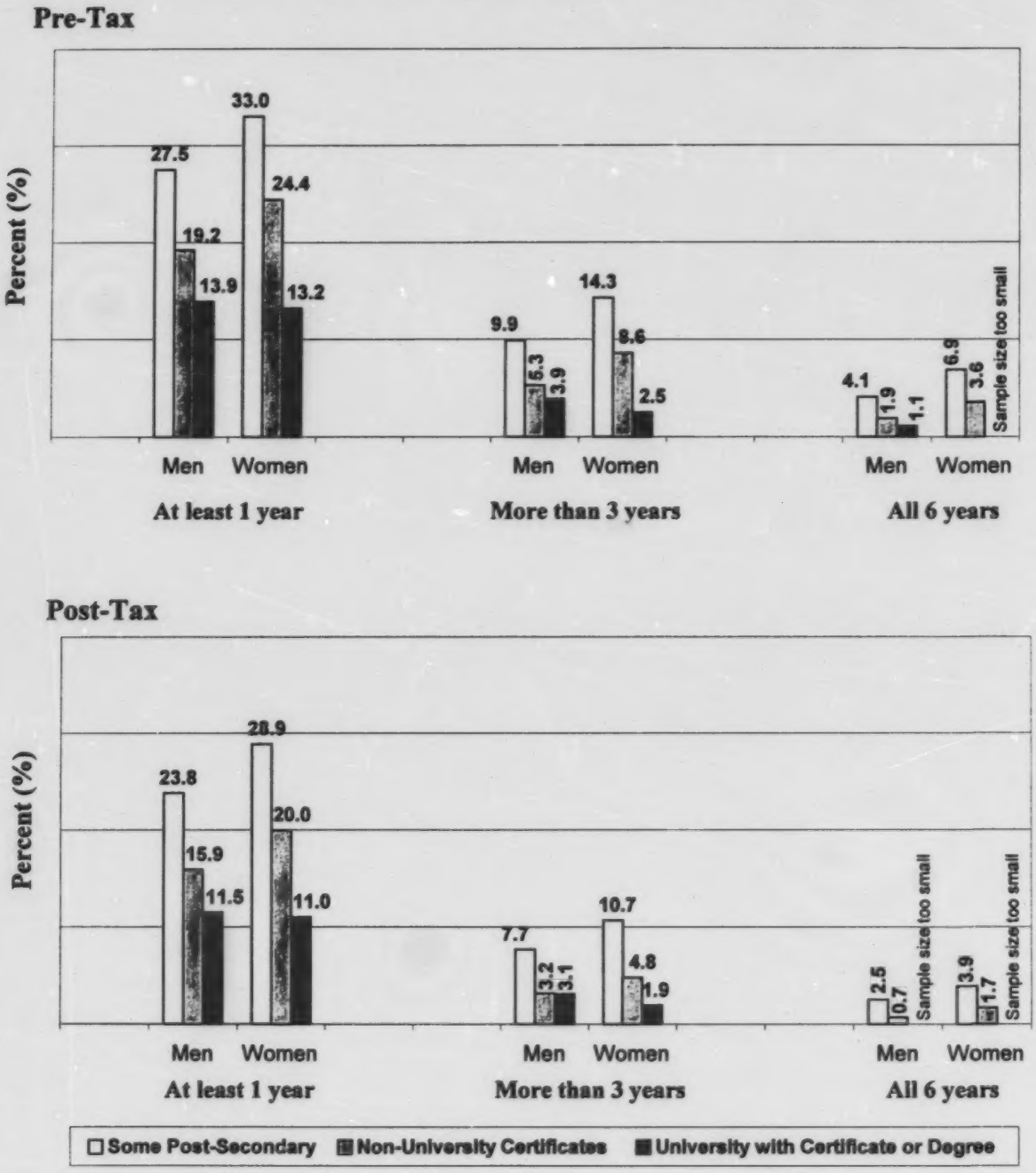


Figure 7.11: Duration of Poverty by Work Limitation in Canada, 1993-1998

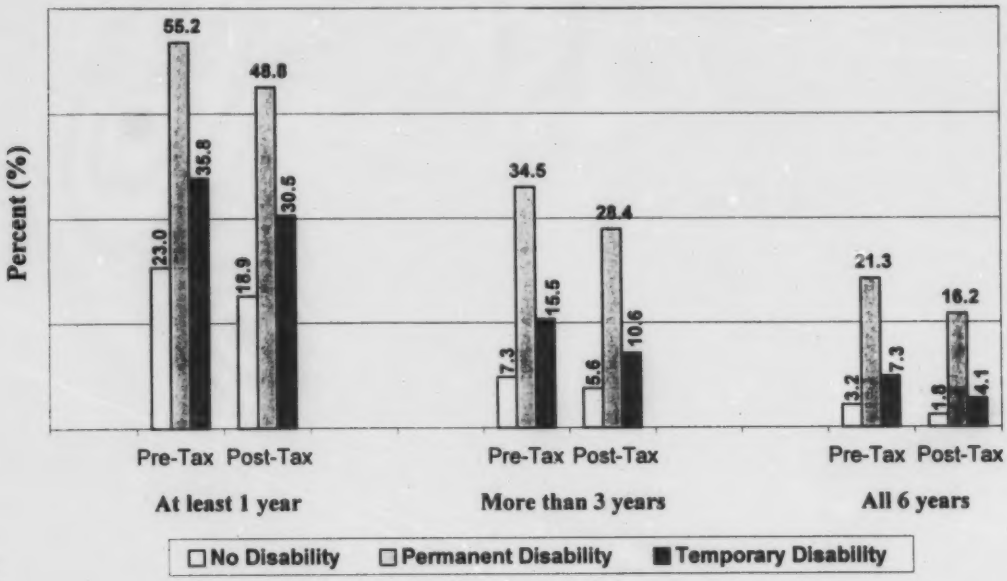


Table 7.18 present details on how long-term poverty rates varied with minority status. According to 1996 Census figures, Aboriginal persons living off-reserve made up only 0.9 percent of the total Canadian population. However, about 49.4 percent of them, compared to 28 percent of persons who are not visible minorities, lived below the pre-tax poverty line in at least one year between 1993 and 1998.

Within the same six-year period, immigrant visible minorities formed about 6 percent of the Canadian population. Yet about 42.5 percent of immigrant visible minorities, compared to 29.5 percent of the total population, lived in poverty in at least one year of the six-year period.

The proportion of Aboriginal persons living in poverty for all of the six years and for more than three years was significantly lower using post-tax rates. However, even after taxes, Aboriginal persons were over-represented among persons exposed to poverty at least once. Moreover, they were second only to members of a visible minority born outside of Canada in terms of proportions of persons who lived in poverty for more than three years. Using post-tax rates, 41.2 percent of Aboriginal persons, 38.3 percent of immigrants, 22.3 percent of persons who do not belong to a visible minority and 18.3 percent of persons who are members of a visible minority experienced poverty at least once.

Persons who immigrated to Canada after 1979 were more likely than persons who immigrated before 1970 or persons born in Canada to have experienced poverty at least once, to have lived in poverty for more than three years and to have lived in poverty for all of the six years. Post-tax poverty rates remained lowest among earlier immigrants to Canada followed closely by persons born in Canada. About 39 percent of persons who immigrated most recently, 26.5 percent of persons who immigrated between 1970 and 1979, 22.5 percent of persons born in Canada and 16.2 percent of persons who immigrated before 1970 lived in poverty for at least one year.

Figure 7.12: Duration of Poverty by Minority Status in Canada, 1993-1998

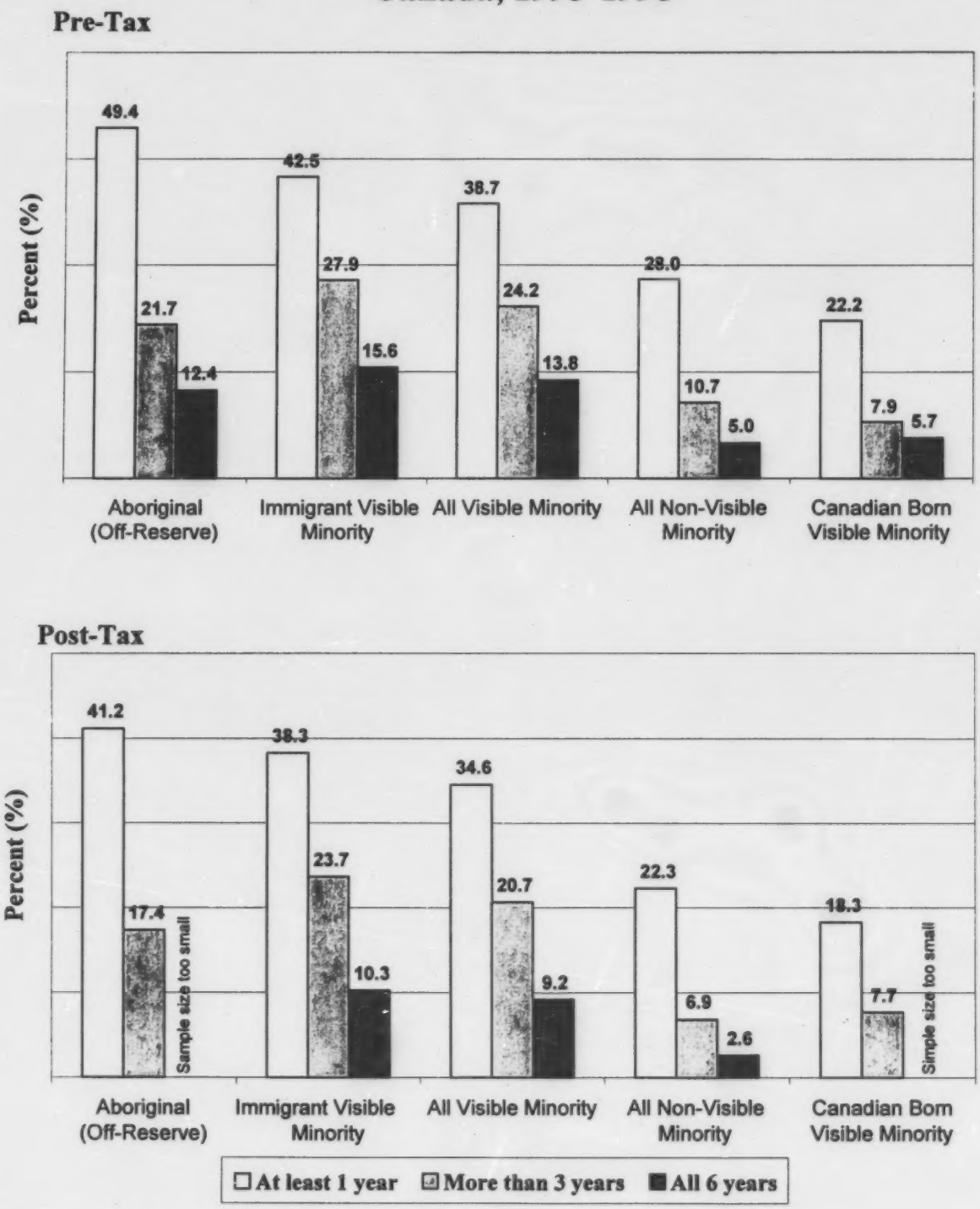


Figure 7.13: Duration of Poverty by Immigration Status, 1993-1998

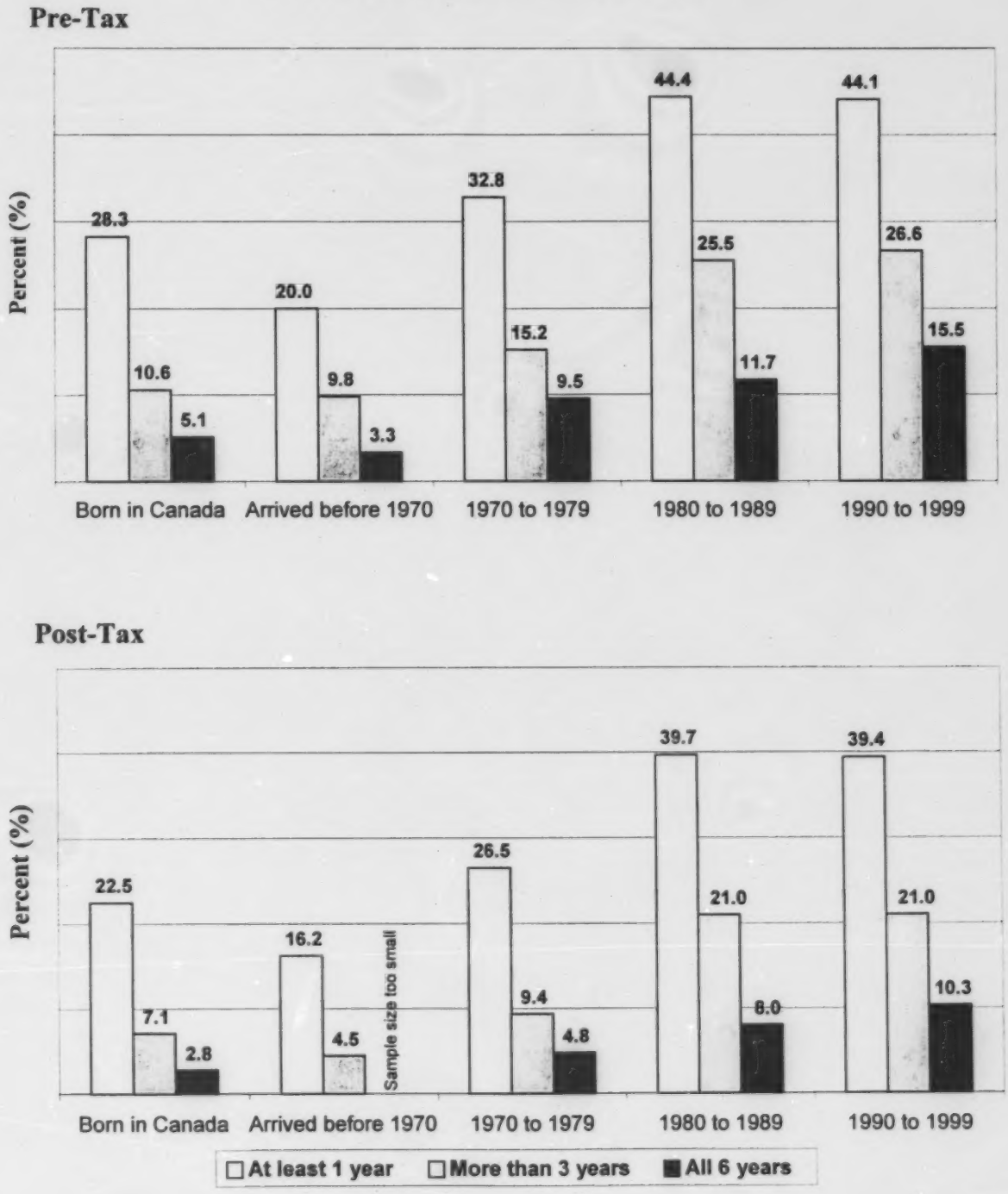


TABLE 7.14: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY, BY FAMILY COMPOSITION, 1993 TO 1998

Family Composition	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years (%)	At Least Once (%)	Four Years or More (%)	All Six Years (%)	At Least Once (%)	Four Years or More (%)
Unattached Individuals (All Years)	1,729,000	24.3	51.2	34.8	15.9	40.0	23.9
Unattached Individuals (1993)	2,870,000	16.7	49.9	28.4	10.4	41.3	19.2
Unattached Individuals Under 65 (All Years)	1,082,000	20.0	46.6	28.3	17.8	43.9	26.7
Unattached Individuals Under 65 (1993)	2,163,000	12.8	46.8	23.2	10.1	43.7	19.5
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over (All Years)	637,000	31.6	59.1	46.0	12.8	33.5	19.1
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over (1993)	707,000	28.5	59.1	44.4	11.6	34.1	18.2
Single-Parent Mothers (All Years)	598,000	41.7	75.8	57.0	18.0	63.5	47.5
Single-Parent Mothers (1993)	1,414,000	23.5	69.7	39.5	10.1	59.4	30.8
Single Parents (All Years)	656,000	39.9	72.0	54.5	18.3	60.2	45.2
Single Parents (1993)	1,652,000	22.9	66.8	38.7	11.4	57.5	30.6
Couples Under 65 without Children Under 18 (All Years)	1,530,000	1.3	16.4	4.9	--	11.9	1.8
Couples Under 65 without Children Under 18 (1993)	3,167,000	1.6	19.1	5.8	0.7	15.1	3.3
Couple Under 65 with Children Under 18 (All Years)	8,073,000	4.2	19.3	7.1	2.5	15.8	5.3
Couple Under 65 with Children Under 18 (1993)	11,843,000	4.1	24.0	8.1	2.4	20.2	5.9
Couples without Children (All Years)	2,529,000	1.4	14.4	4.8	--	7.7	1.1
Couples without Children (1993)	4,477,000	1.5	19.2	6.1	0.5	13.2	2.7
Couples 65 and Over (All Years)	999,000	1.6	11.3	4.7	--	--	--
Couples 65 and Over (1993)	1,310,000	1.3	19.6	7.1	--	8.5	1.3

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.15: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY AGE, 1993 TO 1998							
Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or More	All Six Years	At least Once	Four Years or More
Age – Less than 6	1,844,000	9.7	33.8	15.7	5.0	29.5	12.3
Age – 6 to 17	4,640,000	6.0	33.0	12.4	3.0	28.2	9.1
Age – Less than 18	6,484,000	7.1	33.2	13.4	3.6	28.5	10.0
Age – 18 to 64	16,415,000	5.1	27.9	10.8	3.1	23.6	8.0
Age – 18 to 24	2,480,000	5.0	44.3	14.0	3.0	38.4	10.8
Age – 25 to 34	4,487,000	5.2	28.1	10.4	2.8	23.5	7.9
Age – 35 to 44	4,226,000	4.7	22.6	9.1	2.9	19.1	7.0
Age – 45 to 54	3,027,000	5.1	21.2	9.5	3.6	18.7	7.4
Age – 55 to 64	2,196,000	6.0	28.5	13.4	3.5	22.8	7.8
Age – 65 and Over	2,317,000	9.6	30.7	17.5	3.5	15.9	6.2

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

TABLE 7.16: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY SEX AND AGE, 1993 TO 1998							
Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families*	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or More	All Six Years	At least Once	Four Years or More
Women - 18 to 64	8,290,000	6.2	30.7	12.5	3.5	25.8	9.0
18 to 24 - All	1,250,000	7.1	48.5	17.0	3.6	42.1	12.2
Students	707,000	6.5	50.2	16.6	1.9	43.7	11.4
Non-Students	542,000	7.9	46.3	17.5	5.8	40.1	13.4
25 to 34	2,260,000	7.0	30.9	12.4	3.5	26.6	9.5
35 to 44	2,141,000	5.0	24.3	9.6	3.0	19.9	7.4
45 to 54	1,509,000	5.4	23.2	10.3	3.4	20.2	7.4
55 to 64	1,130,000	7.0	32.5	16.4	4.5	24.9	9.5
65 and over	1,393,000	13.8	38.4	23.0	5.1	21.6	8.1
Men - 18 to 64	8,125,000	4.0	25.1	9.1	2.7	21.4	7.0
18 to 24 - All	1,230,000	2.9	40.1	11.0	2.4	34.7	9.3
Students	684,000	2.9	45.1	12.2	2.6	39.6	11.2
Non-Students	546,000	2.9	33.9	9.5	--	28.5	6.8
25 to 34	2,226,000	3.4	25.3	8.3	2.1	20.3	6.4
35 to 44	2,085,000	4.3	20.8	8.6	2.9	18.2	6.7
45 to 54	1,158,000	4.8	19.1	8.7	3.7	17.1	7.3
55 to 64	1,066,000	5.0	24.2	10.1	2.5	20.5	6.0
65 and Over	924,000	3.4	19.2	9.3	--	7.3	3.3

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

*Due to the effects of rounding, sub-categories of a particular group may not always add up exactly to total.

--Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.14: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY, BY FAMILY COMPOSITION, 1993 TO 1998

Family Composition	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years (%)	At Least Once (%)	Four Years or More (%)	All Six Years (%)	At Least Once (%)	Four Years or More (%)
Unattached Individuals (All Years)	1,729,000	24.3	51.2	34.8	15.9	40.0	23.9
Unattached Individuals (1993)	2,870,000	16.7	49.9	28.4	10.4	41.3	19.2
Unattached Individuals Under 65 (All Years)	1,082,000	20.0	46.6	28.3	17.8	43.9	26.7
Unattached Individuals Under 65 (1993)	2,163,000	12.8	46.8	23.2	10.1	43.7	19.5
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over (All Years)	637,000	31.6	59.1	46.0	12.8	33.5	19.1
Unattached Individuals 65 and Over (1993)	707,000	28.5	59.1	44.4	11.6	34.1	18.2
Single-Parent Mothers (All Years)	598,000	41.7	75.8	57.0	18.0	63.5	47.5
Single-Parent Mothers (1993)	1,414,000	23.5	69.7	39.5	10.1	59.4	30.8
Single Parents (All Years)	656,000	39.9	72.0	54.5	18.3	60.2	45.2
Single Parents (1993)	1,652,000	22.9	66.8	38.7	11.4	57.5	30.6
Couples Under 65 without Children Under 18 (All Years)	1,530,000	1.3	16.4	4.9	--	11.9	1.8
Couples Under 65 without Children Under 18 (1993)	3,167,000	1.6	19.1	5.8	0.7	15.1	3.3
Couple Under 65 with Children Under 18 (All Years)	8,073,000	4.2	19.3	7.1	2.5	15.8	5.3
Couple Under 65 with Children Under 18 (1993)	11,843,000	4.1	24.0	8.1	2.4	20.2	5.9
Couples without Children (All Years)	2,529,000	1.4	14.4	4.8	--	7.7	1.1
Couples without Children (1993)	4,477,000	1.5	19.2	6.1	0.5	13.2	2.7
Couples 65 and Over (All Years)	999,000	1.6	11.3	4.7	--	--	--
Couples 65 and Over (1993)	1,310,000	1.3	19.6	7.1	--	8.5	1.3

-- Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.15: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY AGE, 1993 TO 1998							
Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or More	All Six Years	At least Once	Four Years or More
Age – Less than 6	1,844,000	9.7	33.8	15.7	5.0	29.5	12.3
Age – 6 to 17	4,640,000	6.0	33.0	12.4	3.0	28.2	9.1
Age – Less than 18	6,484,000	7.1	33.2	13.4	3.6	28.5	10.0
Age – 18 to 64	16,415,000	5.1	27.9	10.8	3.1	23.6	8.0
Age – 18 to 24	2,480,000	5.0	44.3	14.0	3.0	38.4	10.8
Age – 25 to 34	4,487,000	5.2	28.1	10.4	2.8	23.5	7.9
Age – 35 to 44	4,226,000	4.7	22.6	9.1	2.9	19.1	7.0
Age – 45 to 54	3,027,000	5.1	21.2	9.5	3.6	18.7	7.4
Age – 55 to 64	2,196,000	6.0	28.5	13.4	3.5	22.8	7.8
Age – 65 and Over	2,317,000	9.6	30.7	17.5	3.5	15.9	6.2

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

TABLE 7.16: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY SEX AND AGE, 1993 TO 1998							
Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families*	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or More	All Six Years	At least Once	Four Years or More
Women - 18 to 64	8,290,000	6.2	30.7	12.5	3.5	25.8	9.0
18 to 24 - All	1,250,000	7.1	48.5	17.0	3.6	42.1	12.2
Students	707,000	6.5	50.2	16.6	1.9	43.7	11.4
Non-Students	542,000	7.9	46.3	17.5	5.8	40.1	13.4
25 to 34	2,260,000	7.0	30.9	12.4	3.5	26.6	9.5
35 to 44	2,141,000	5.0	24.3	9.6	3.0	19.9	7.4
45 to 54	1,509,000	5.4	23.2	10.3	3.4	20.2	7.4
55 to 64	1,130,000	7.0	32.5	16.4	4.5	24.9	9.5
65 and over	1,393,000	13.8	38.4	23.0	5.1	21.6	8.1
Men - 18 to 64	8,125,000	4.0	25.1	9.1	2.7	21.4	7.0
18 to 24 - All	1,230,000	2.9	40.1	11.0	2.4	34.7	9.3
Students	684,000	2.9	45.1	12.2	2.6	39.6	11.2
Non-Students	546,000	2.9	33.9	9.5	--	28.5	6.8
25 to 34	2,226,000	3.4	25.3	8.3	2.1	20.3	6.4
35 to 44	2,085,000	4.3	20.8	8.6	2.9	18.2	6.7
45 to 54	1,158,000	4.8	19.1	8.7	3.7	17.1	7.3
55 to 64	1,066,000	5.0	24.2	10.1	2.5	20.5	6.0
65 and Over	924,000	3.4	19.2	9.3	--	7.3	3.3

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

*Due to the effects of rounding, sub-categories of a particular group may not always add up exactly to total.

--Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.17: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 1993 TO 1998

Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals *	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer	All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer
Education Status Unchanged							
Less Than High School							
All (All Years)	4,578,000	11.1	37.4	20.1	6.2	26.9	12.5
Women (All Years)	2,393,000	14.4	43.6	24.9	7.5	31.3	14.6
Men (All Years)	2,185,000	7.5	30.7	14.8	4.6	22.0	10.1
High School Completed							
All (All Years)	2,385,000	6.2	25.0	10.0	4.0	20.0	7.2
Women (All Years)	1,360,000	6.9	27.5	11.6	4.0	21.9	7.7
Men (All Years)	1,025,000	5.2	21.6	7.9	4.0	17.5	6.6
Some Post-Secondary							
All (All Years)	1,783,000	5.5	30.2	12.1	3.2	26.3	9.2
Women (All Years)	873,000	6.9	33.0	14.3	3.9	28.9	10.7
Men (All Years)	910,000	4.1	27.5	9.9	2.5	23.8	7.7
Non-university certificates							
All (All Years)	5,042,000	2.8	22.0	7.0	1.2	18.0	4.0
Women (All Years)	2,655,000	3.6	24.4	8.6	1.7	20.0	4.8
Men (All Years)	2,388,000	1.9	19.2	5.3	0.7	15.9	3.2
University with certificate or degree							
All (All Years)	2,640,000	0.9	13.6	3.2	--	11.3	2.5
Women (All Years)	1,236,000	--	13.2	2.5	--	11.0	1.9
Men (All Years)	1,404,000	1.1	13.9	3.9	--	11.5	3.1
Education Changed							
All	2,793,000	5.6	43.3	14.9	2.6	37.6	11.5
Women	1,402,000	7.0	48.9	16.3	2.4	41.7	11.7
Men	1,391,000	4.1	37.7	13.4	2.9	33.4	11.3
Age 18 to 24 Only							
All	2,480,000	5.0	44.3	14.0	3.0	38.4	10.8
Students	1,391,000	4.8	47.7	14.4	2.2	41.7	11.3
Non-Students	1,088,000	5.4	40.1	13.5	4.0	34.3	10.0
Women - All	1,250,000	7.1	48.5	17.0	3.6	42.1	12.2
Students	707,000	6.5	50.2	16.6	1.9	43.7	11.4
Non-Students	542,000	7.9	46.3	17.5	5.8	40.1	13.4
Men - All	1,230,000	2.9	40.1	11.0	2.4	34.7	9.3
Students	684,000	2.9	45.1	12.2	2.6	39.6	11.2
Non-Students	546,000	2.9	33.9	9.5	--	28.5	6.8

*Due to the effects of rounding, sub-categories of a particular group may not always add up exactly to total.
--Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.18: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY DISABILITY, VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS AND IMMIGRATION STATUS IN CANADA, 1993 TO 1998

Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer	All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer
Work Limitation Status							
Work Limitation	372,000	21.3	55.2	34.5	16.2	48.8	28.4
Work Limitation – Status Changed	6,868,000	7.3	35.8	15.5	4.1	30.5	10.6
No Work Limitation	10,450,000	3.2	23.0	7.3	1.8	18.9	5.6
Visible Minority Status							
Minority Status – Aboriginal	127,000	12.4	49.4	21.7	--	41.2	17.4
Visible Minority – Immigrant	1,140,000	15.6	42.5	27.9	10.3	38.3	23.7
Visible Minority	1,399,000	13.8	38.7	24.2	9.2	34.6	20.7
Not A Visible Minority	18,008,000	5.0	28.0	10.7	2.6	22.3	6.9
Visible Minority – Canadian Born	252,000	5.7	22.2	7.9	--	18.3	7.7
Immigration Status							
Immigrant, after 1989	562,000	15.5	44.1	26.6	10.3	39.4	21.0
Immigrant, 1980-1989	658,000	11.7	44.4	25.5	8.0	39.7	21.0
Immigrant, 1970-1979	782,000	9.5	32.8	15.2	4.8	26.5	9.4
Immigrant, before 1970	1,612,000	3.3	20.0	9.8	--	16.2	4.5
Canadian Born	15,794,000	5.1	28.3	10.6	2.8	22.5	7.1

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993-1999.

--Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.17: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 1993 TO 1998

Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals *	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer	All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer
Education Status Unchanged							
Less Than High School							
All (All Years)	4,578,000	11.1	37.4	20.1	6.2	26.9	12.5
Women (All Years)	2,393,000	14.4	43.6	24.9	7.5	31.3	14.6
Men (All Years)	2,185,000	7.5	30.7	14.8	4.6	22.0	10.1
High School Completed							
All (All Years)	2,385,000	6.2	25.0	10.0	4.0	20.0	7.2
Women (All Years)	1,360,000	6.9	27.5	11.6	4.0	21.9	7.7
Men (All Years)	1,025,000	5.2	21.6	7.9	4.0	17.5	6.6
Some Post-Secondary							
All (All Years)	1,783,000	5.5	30.2	12.1	3.2	26.3	9.2
Women (All Years)	873,000	6.9	33.0	14.3	3.9	28.9	10.7
Men (All Years)	910,000	4.1	27.5	9.9	2.5	23.8	7.7
Non-university certificates							
All (All Years)	5,042,000	2.8	22.0	7.0	1.2	18.0	4.0
Women (All Years)	2,655,000	3.6	24.4	8.6	1.7	20.0	4.8
Men (All Years)	2,388,000	1.9	19.2	5.3	0.7	15.9	3.2
University with certificate or degree							
All (All Years)	2,640,000	0.9	13.6	3.2	--	11.3	2.5
Women (All Years)	1,236,000	--	13.2	2.5	--	11.0	1.9
Men (All Years)	1,404,000	1.1	13.9	3.9	--	11.5	3.1
Education Changed							
All	2,793,000	5.6	43.3	14.9	2.6	37.6	11.5
Women	1,402,000	7.0	48.9	16.3	2.4	41.7	11.7
Men	1,391,000	4.1	37.7	13.4	2.9	33.4	11.3
Age 18 to 24 Only							
All	2,480,000	5.0	44.3	14.0	3.0	38.4	10.8
Students	1,391,000	4.8	47.7	14.4	2.2	41.7	11.3
Non-Students	1,088,000	5.4	40.1	13.5	4.0	34.3	10.0
Women - All	1,250,000	7.1	48.5	17.0	3.6	42.1	12.2
Students	707,000	6.5	50.2	16.6	1.9	43.7	11.4
Non-Students	542,000	7.9	46.3	17.5	5.8	40.1	13.4
Men - All	1,230,000	2.9	40.1	11.0	2.4	34.7	9.3
Students	684,000	2.9	45.1	12.2	2.6	39.6	11.2
Non-Students	546,000	2.9	33.9	9.5	--	28.5	6.8

*Due to the effects of rounding, sub-categories of a particular group may not always add up exactly to total.
--Sample size too small.

TABLE 7.18: YEARS LIVED IN POVERTY BY DISABILITY, VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS AND IMMIGRATION STATUS IN CANADA, 1993 TO 1998

Characteristics	Total Number of Individuals or Families	Pre-Tax (%)			Post-Tax (%)		
		All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer	All Six Years	At Least Once	Four Years or Longer
Work Limitation Status							
Work Limitation	372,000	21.3	55.2	34.5	16.2	48.8	28.4
Work Limitation – Status Changed	6,868,000	7.3	35.8	15.5	4.1	30.5	10.6
No Work Limitation	10,450,000	3.2	23.0	7.3	1.8	18.9	5.6
Visible Minority Status							
Minority Status – Aboriginal	127,000	12.4	49.4	21.7	--	41.2	17.4
Visible Minority – Immigrant	1,140,000	15.6	42.5	27.9	10.3	38.3	23.7
Visible Minority	1,399,000	13.8	38.7	24.2	9.2	34.6	20.7
Not A Visible Minority	18,008,000	5.0	28.0	10.7	2.6	22.3	6.9
Visible Minority – Canadian Born	252,000	5.7	22.2	7.9	--	18.3	7.7
Immigration Status							
Immigrant, after 1989	562,000	15.5	44.1	26.6	10.3	39.4	21.0
Immigrant, 1980-1989	658,000	11.7	44.4	25.5	8.0	39.7	21.0
Immigrant, 1970-1979	782,000	9.5	32.8	15.2	4.8	26.5	9.4
Immigrant, before 1970	1,612,000	3.3	20.0	9.8	--	16.2	4.5
Canadian Born	15,794,000	5.1	28.3	10.6	2.8	22.5	7.1

Source: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 1993-1999.

--Sample size too small.

VIII. A CLOSER LOOK AT GROUPS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

WOMEN

As noted in earlier chapters, women face a significantly higher risk of poverty than men. Table 8.1 gives the poverty rates for women and men age 18 and older for the years 1980 to 1999, and the ratio of female to male poverty rates each year. Table 8.2 presents both the pre-tax and the post-tax poverty rates for women and men for 1999.

In 1980, the poverty rate for adult women was 18.8 percent, the rate for adult men was 13.2 percent and the ratio of poor women to poor men was 1.42 to 1. In 1999, the poverty rate for women was 17.5 percent, the rate for men was 13.2 percent and the ratio between the sexes was 1.33 to 1. The best gender ratio during the 1980-99 period was 1.26 to 1 in 1996 and it has deteriorated somewhat since then.

Most of the differences between the sexes can be explained by the high poverty rates of three family types: unattached women under 65, unattached women 65 and over, and single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18. The 1999 poverty rate for unattached women under 65 was 42.3 percent, compared to 33.2 percent for unattached men under 65. For unattached seniors, the poverty rates were 48.5 percent for women and 33.2 percent for men. Single-parent families led by women had a poverty rate of 51.8 percent in 1999. Most women in Canada are in husband-wife families, and the poverty rates for husbands and wives are considered to be identical in these cases[1].

In working age husband-wife families, one fact that deserves special mention is the role of women's earnings in keeping their families out of poverty. Although women earn less on average than men and face a number of barriers to equal participation in the labour force, their contribution is essential to keeping family poverty rates relatively low.

To get a better idea of the importance of women's earnings to their families, we asked Statistics Canada to subtract the earnings of wives from the total income of husband-wife families and calculate hypothetical poverty rates for families with wives' earnings removed as in Table 8.3. Only families where women had earnings in 1999 are included in the table.

Poverty rates for families with children are considerably higher when wives' earnings are deducted from total income, compared to poverty rates for families with no children under 18. For example, when the incomes of both husbands and wives are considered, the actual poverty rate for husband-wife families with children under 18 years of age was 5.8 percent using pre-tax measures. However, if wives' earnings were deducted from total income, poverty rates would have been about four times higher at 21.4 percent.

[1] A caveat is in order here. The National Council of Welfare recognizes that in reality, couples do not necessarily share their incomes equally. See Phipps, Shelley; MacDonald, Martha and Macphail, Fiona: "Gender Equity within Families versus Better Targeting" in *Canadian Public Policy* (XXVII no 4, December 2001).

TABLE 8.1: TRENDS IN POVERTY AMONG WOMEN AND MEN 18 AND OVER, 1980-1999

	Women		Men		Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates
	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	
1980	1,657,000	18.8%	1,133,000	13.2%	1.42
1981	1,670,000	18.4%	1,152,000	13.1%	1.40
1982	1,745,000	18.8%	1,266,000	14.1%	1.33
1983	1,930,000	20.5%	1,431,000	15.8%	1.30
1984	1,958,000	20.5%	1,423,000	15.4%	1.33
1985	1,887,000	19.5%	1,352,000	14.4%	1.35
1986	1,812,000	18.5%	1,298,000	13.7%	1.35
1987	1,813,000	18.2%	1,291,000	13.4%	1.36
1988	1,804,000	17.8%	1,186,000	12.2%	1.46
1989	1,668,000	16.2%	1,087,000	11.0%	1.47
1990	1,783,000	17.1%	1,203,000	12.0%	1.43
1991	1,911,000	18.0%	1,352,000	13.2%	1.36
1992	2,000,000	18.5%	1,449,000	13.9%	1.33
1993	2,137,000	19.5%	1,522,000	14.4%	1.35
1994	2,090,000	18.8%	1,473,000	13.7%	1.37
1995	2,122,000	18.8%	1,595,000	14.7%	1.28
1996	2,248,000	19.7%	1,701,000	15.6%	1.26
1997	2,287,000	19.8%	1,669,000	15.0%	1.32
1998	2,146,000	18.3%	1,555,000	13.8%	1.33
1999	2,074,000	17.5%	1,499,000	13.2%	1.33

TABLE 8.2: TRENDS IN POVERTY AMONG WOMEN AND MEN 18 AND OVER, 1999

	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates
	Pre-Tax			Post-Tax		
Women	2,074,000	17.5%	1.33	1,466,000	12.4%	1.25
Men	1,499,000	13.2%		1,127,000	9.9%	

TABLE 8.3: POVERTY RATES FOR HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES UNDER AGE 65, WITH AND WITHOUT THE EARNINGS OF WIVES, 1999

Family	All Families	Number of Poor Families				Poverty Rate			
		With Woman's Earnings		Without Woman's Earnings		With Woman's Earnings		Without Woman's Earnings	
		Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with Children Under 18	2,475,000	142,000	74,000	530,000	369,000	5.8%	3.0%	21.4%	14.9%
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with at Least One Child Under Six	1,035,000	75,000	34,000	215,000	153,000	7.2%	3.3%	20.8%	14.8%
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with All Children Six to 17 Years Old	1,441,000	68,000	40,000	315,000	216,000	4.7%	2.8%	21.9%	15.0%
Couples without Children	2,100,000	79,000	43,000	354,000	257,000	3.8%	2.1%	16.9%	12.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

TABLE 8.1: TRENDS IN POVERTY AMONG WOMEN AND MEN 18 AND OVER, 1980-1999					
	Women		Men		Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates
	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	
1980	1,657,000	18.8%	1,133,000	13.2%	1.42
1981	1,670,000	18.4%	1,152,000	13.1%	1.40
1982	1,745,000	18.8%	1,266,000	14.1%	1.33
1983	1,930,000	20.5%	1,431,000	15.8%	1.30
1984	1,958,000	20.5%	1,423,000	15.4%	1.33
1985	1,887,000	19.5%	1,352,000	14.4%	1.35
1986	1,812,000	18.5%	1,298,000	13.7%	1.35
1987	1,813,000	18.2%	1,291,000	13.4%	1.36
1988	1,804,000	17.8%	1,186,000	12.2%	1.46
1989	1,668,000	16.2%	1,087,000	11.0%	1.47
1990	1,783,000	17.1%	1,203,000	12.0%	1.43
1991	1,911,000	18.0%	1,352,000	13.2%	1.36
1992	2,000,000	18.5%	1,449,000	13.9%	1.33
1993	2,137,000	19.5%	1,522,000	14.4%	1.35
1994	2,090,000	18.8%	1,473,000	13.7%	1.37
1995	2,122,000	18.8%	1,595,000	14.7%	1.28
1996	2,248,000	19.7%	1,701,000	15.6%	1.26
1997	2,287,000	19.8%	1,669,000	15.0%	1.32
1998	2,146,000	18.3%	1,555,000	13.8%	1.33
1999	2,074,000	17.5%	1,499,000	13.2%	1.33

TABLE 8.2: TRENDS IN POVERTY AMONG WOMEN AND MEN 18 AND OVER, 1999						
	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates	Number of Poor	Poverty Rate (%)	Ratio of Female to Male Poverty Rates
	Pre-Tax			Post-Tax		
Women	2,074,000	17.5%	1.33	1,466,000	12.4%	1.25
Men	1,499,000	13.2%		1,127,000	9.9%	

TABLE 8.3: POVERTY RATES FOR HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES UNDER AGE 65, WITH AND WITHOUT THE EARNINGS OF WIVES, 1999

Family	All Families	Number of Poor Families				Poverty Rate			
		With Woman's Earnings		Without Woman's Earnings		With Woman's Earnings		Without Woman's Earnings	
		Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with Children Under 18	2,475,000	142,000	74,000	530,000	369,000	5.8%	3.0%	21.4%	14.9%
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with at Least One Child Under Six	1,035,000	75,000	34,000	215,000	153,000	7.2%	3.3%	20.8%	14.8%
Two-Parent Families Under 65 with All Children Six to 17 Years Old	1,441,000	68,000	40,000	315,000	216,000	4.7%	2.8%	21.9%	15.0%
Couples without Children	2,100,000	79,000	43,000	354,000	257,000	3.8%	2.1%	16.9%	12.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, Income Statistics Division, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

For couples with no children, the spousal contribution had a similar effect on pre-tax poverty rates. When both husbands' and wives' earnings were considered, the poverty rate was 3.8 percent but without wives' earnings would have been 16.9 percent. Using post-tax poverty rates, the differences were even more dramatic. The rate would have been five times higher for families with children and six times higher for couples without children.

CHILDREN

Child poverty rates reflect parental poverty rates and tend to rise or fall as economic conditions deteriorate or improve. The national poverty rate for children fell from 19.2 percent in 1998 to 18.7 percent in 1999, and the number of poor children fell from 1,353,000 to 1,313,000. The most striking difference year after year, however, is the huge gulf between the poverty rates for children in two-parent families and the rates for children in single-parent families. There are also important differences from province to province.

One of the long-standing myths about child poverty is that most poor children live in single-parent households. Figures 8.5 to 8.7 show that this is not the case. In 1999, a total of 1,305,000 children lived in poverty. Of these, 696,000 poor children lived in two-parent families and 522,000 poor children lived in single-mother families. These numbers have increased since 1980 when 652,000 poor children lived with two parents and 354,000 with single mother and 19,000 in single-father families. There were also 35,000 poor children in 1980 and 53,000 in 1999 living in less common family circumstances for example, with parents aged 65 years or older. With the exception of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, there are more poor children living in two-parent families than in single-parent families.

Nonetheless, the proportion of children living with single-parent mothers in poverty has grown substantially over the last two decades. As Figure 8.4 shows, 33 percent of all poor children in 1980 lived in families headed by single-parent mothers, and most of the rest lived in two-parent families. Figure 8.5 demonstrates that in 1999, the comparative proportion of poor children with single-parent mothers was up to 40 percent and the proportion living with both parents was down to 53 percent.

The provincial child poverty rates for 1999 are shown in Figure 8.6. Provincial trends in child poverty from 1980 to 1999 are shown in Figures 8.7 to Figure 8.16. The lowest provincial child poverty rate in 1999 was 16.4 percent in Prince Edward Island, and the highest was 25.7 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Between 1998 and 1999, the poverty rates for children rose slightly by 0.2 percentage points in Manitoba and by 0.4 percentage points in Newfoundland and Labrador but jumped by 5.4 percentage points in Prince Edward Island. In contrast, child poverty rates decreased marginally by 0.1 percentage points in New Brunswick, by 0.7 percentage points in each of Saskatchewan and Alberta, by 1.1 percentage points in Ontario, by 3.2 percentage points in British Columbia and by 4.1 percentage points in Nova Scotia.

Figure 8.4: Pre-Tax Distribution of Poor Children by Family Type, 1980

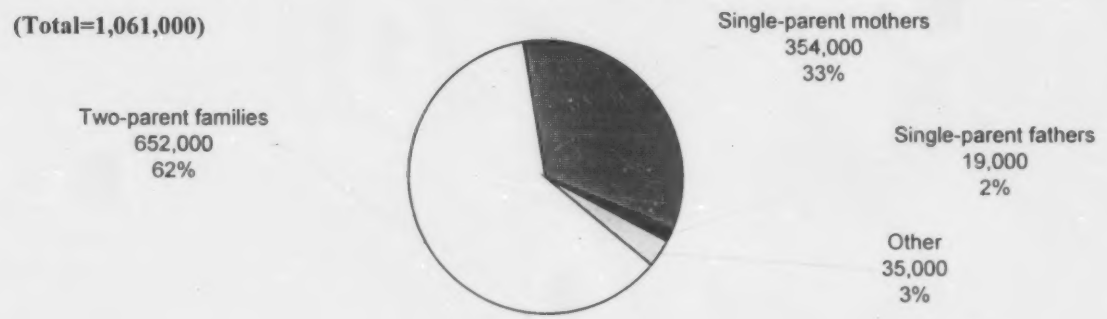
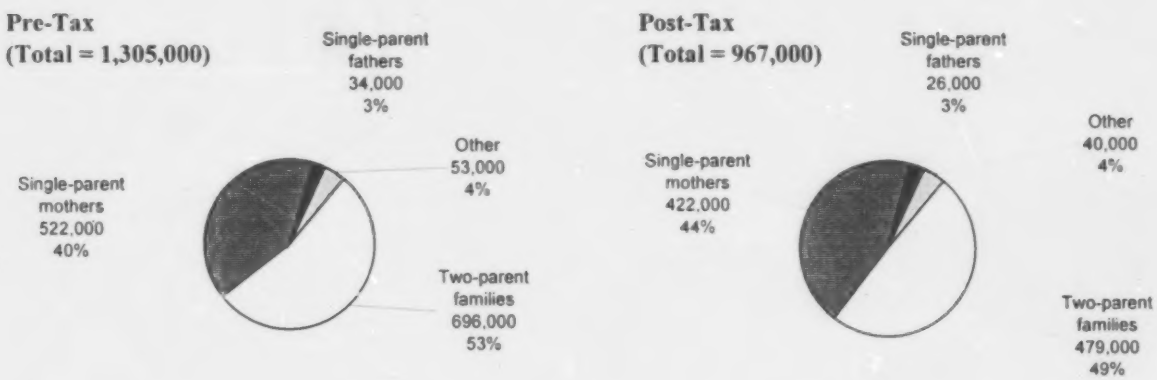


Figure 8.5: Distribution of Poor Children by Family Type, 1999

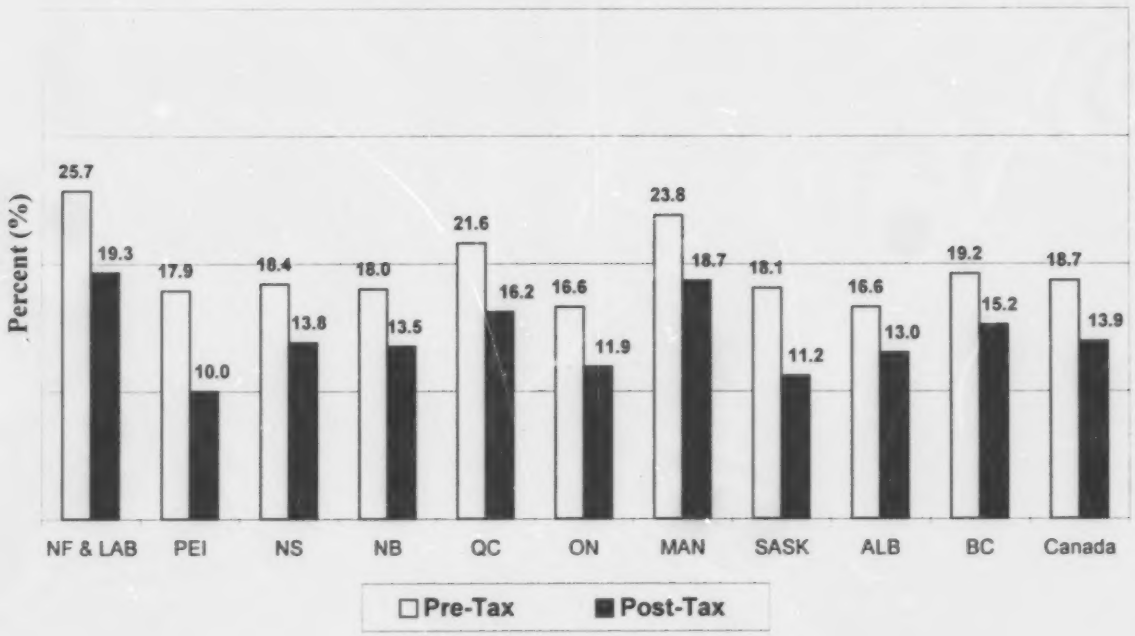


While the national poverty rate for children in two-parent families was 12.2 percent in 1999, provincial rates ranged from a low of 9.3 percent in Nova Scotia to a high of 18.9 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador. The poverty rates for children with single-parent mothers were abysmally high. The national rate was 51.8 percent and the provincial rates ranged from 48.2 percent in Prince Edward Island to 71.6 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SENIORS

Fighting poverty among seniors has been one of Canada's biggest success stories in social policy during the latter part of the 20th century. Poverty rates for people 65 and older have fallen dramatically over the years and continue to fall more or less steadily.

Figure 8.6: Percentage of Children in Poverty, by Province, 1999



In 1999, the poverty rate for all seniors fell to 17.7 percent from 19.7 percent in 1998. Senior couples and unattached senior men were the main beneficiaries. The pre-tax poverty rate for senior couples fell from 7 percent in 1998 to 4.7 percent in 1999. The poverty rate for senior men similarly fell from 35.1 percent in 1998 to 31.9 percent in 1999. The poverty rate for senior women, however, increased from 47.9 percent in 1998 to 48.5 percent in 1999.

Poverty rates for seniors varied from one province to another and varied between women and men in each province. Ontario had a record low rate for senior women of 18.1 percent in 1999 from another low of 18.3 percent in 1998. In the reverse, Quebec had the highest poverty rate for senior women at 31.8 percent in 1999, although it represents a significant improvement from 36.2 percent in 1998.

In all provinces, the poverty rates for senior men remain well below the rates for senior women. Details of the rates for women and men in all provinces from 1980 to 1999 are shown in Figures 8.17 to 8.26.

Figure 8.7: Newfoundland and Labrador
Percent of Children in Poverty

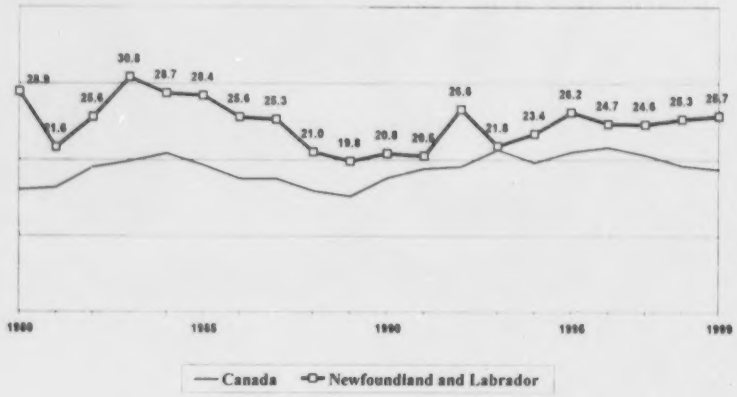


Figure 8.8: Prince Edward Island
Percent of Children in Poverty

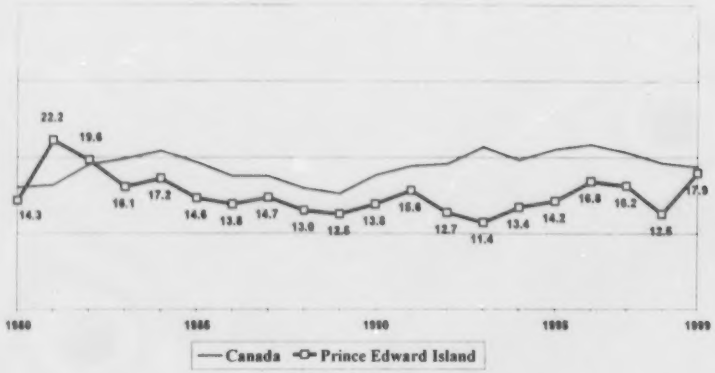


Figure 8.9: Nova Scotia
Percent of Children in Poverty

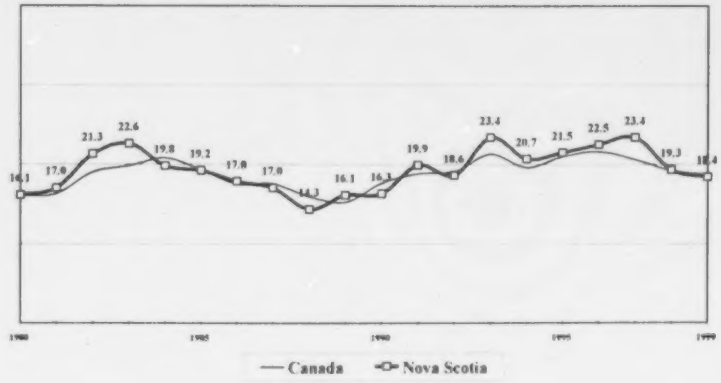


Figure 8.10: New Brunswick
Percent of Children in Poverty

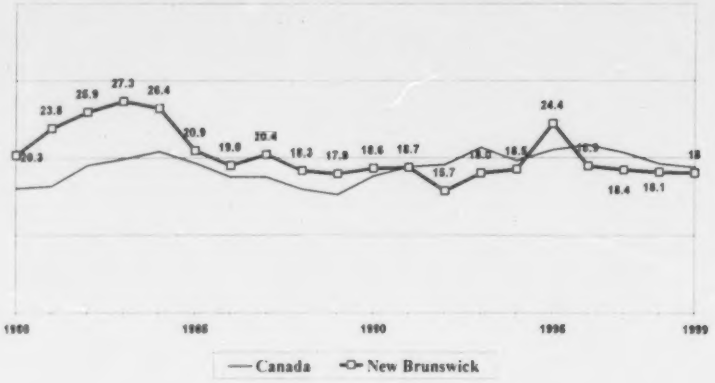


Figure 8.11: Quebec
Percent of Children in Poverty

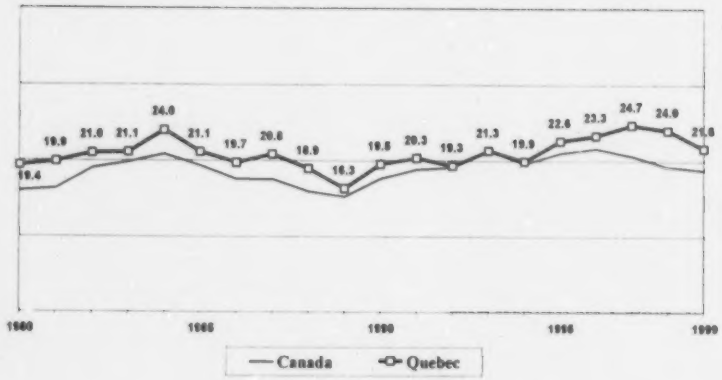


Figure 8.12: Ontario
Percent of Children in Poverty

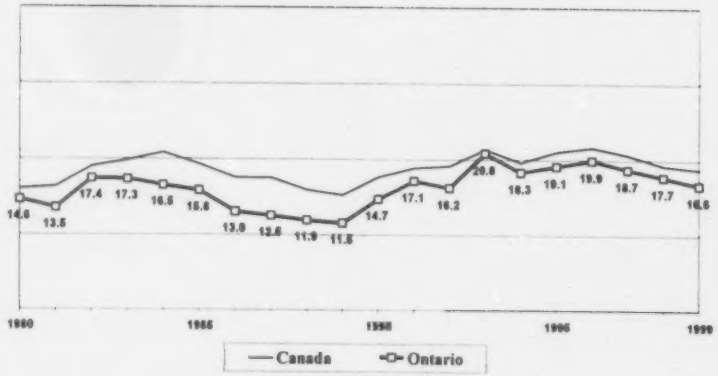


Figure 8.13: Manitoba
Percent of Children in Poverty

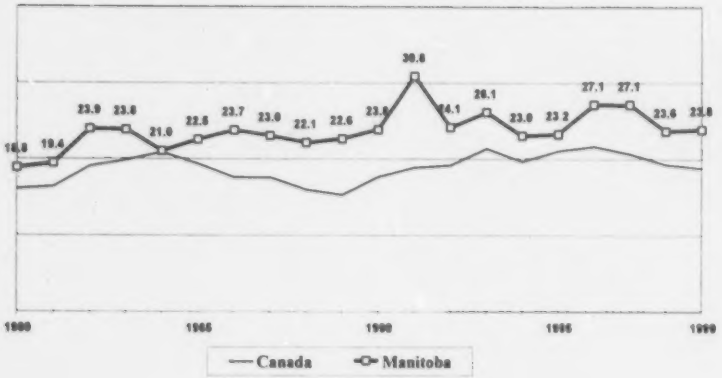


Figure 8.14: Saskatchewan
Percent of Children in Poverty

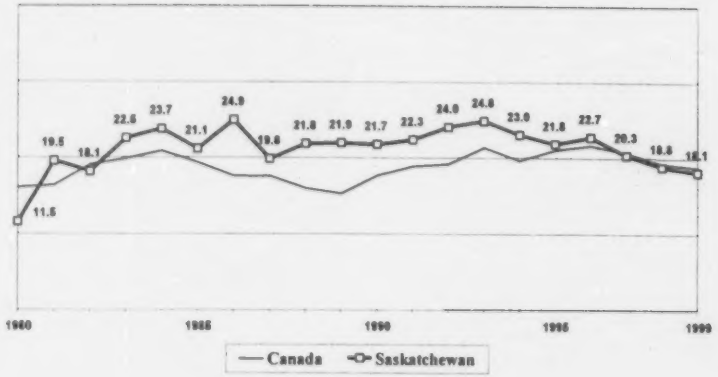


Figure 8.15: Alberta
Percent of Children in Poverty

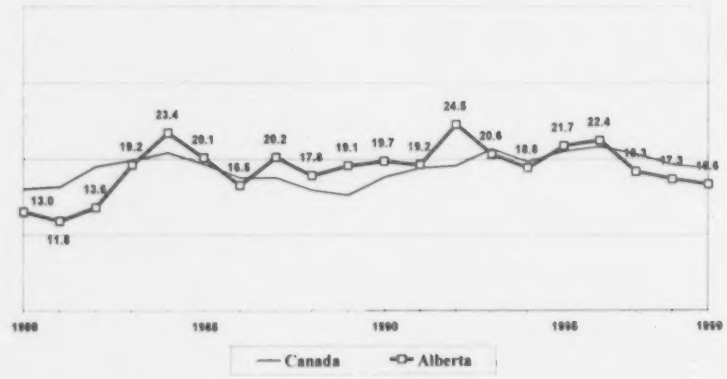


Figure 8.16: British Columbia
Percent of Children in Poverty

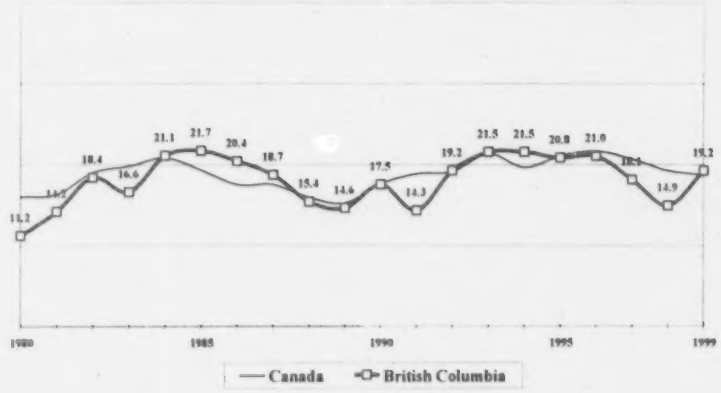


Figure 8.17: Newfoundland and Labrador
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

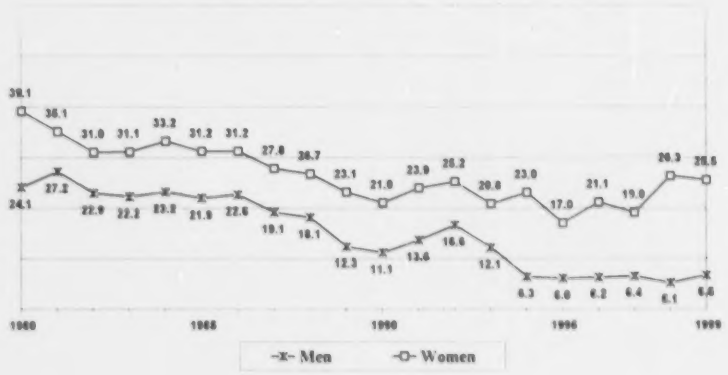


Figure 8.18: Prince Edward Island
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

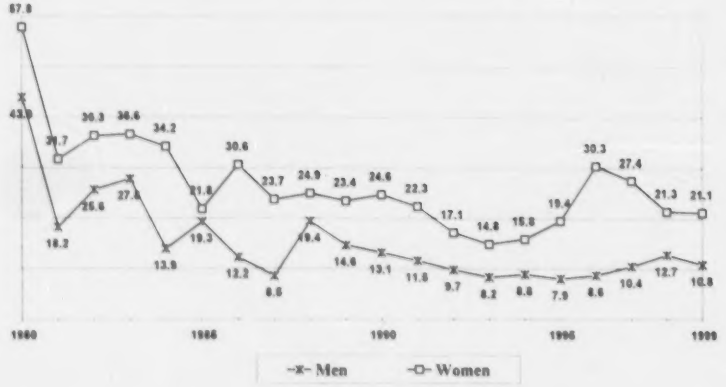


Figure 8.19: Nova Scotia
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

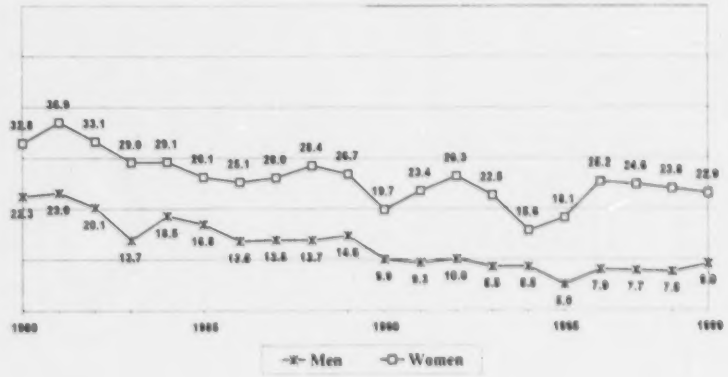


Figure 8.20: New Brunswick
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

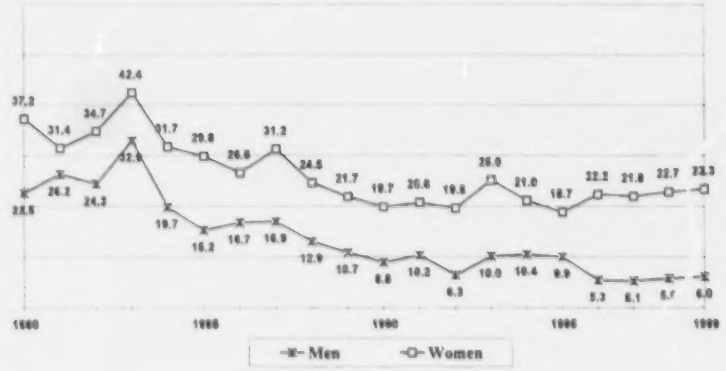


Figure 8.21: Quebec
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

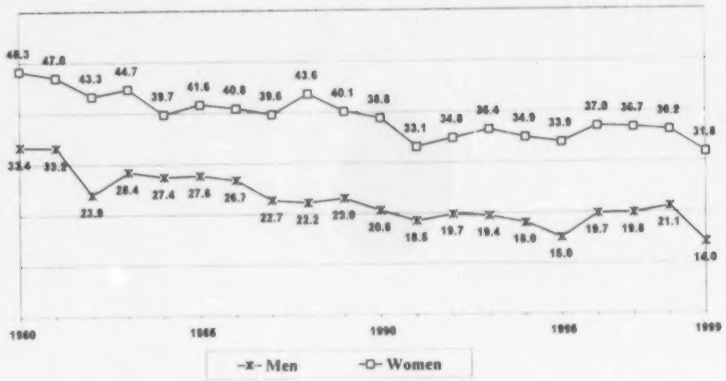


Figure 8.22: Ontario
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

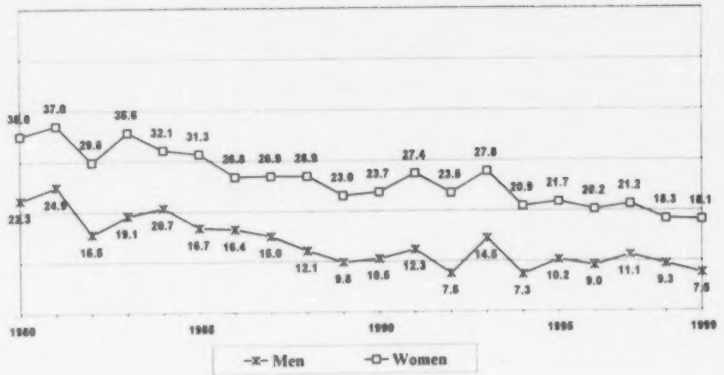


Figure 8.23: Manitoba
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

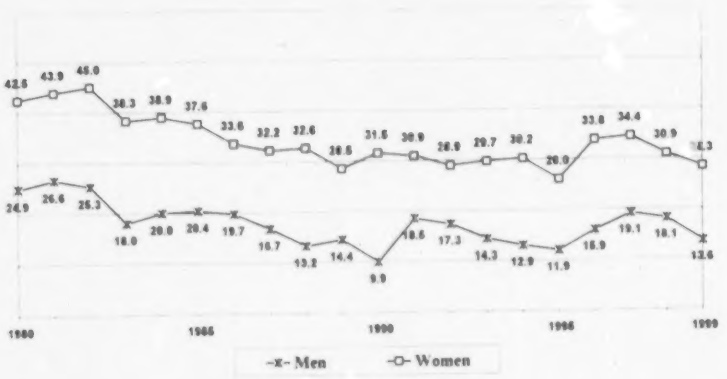


Figure 8.24: Saskatchewan
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

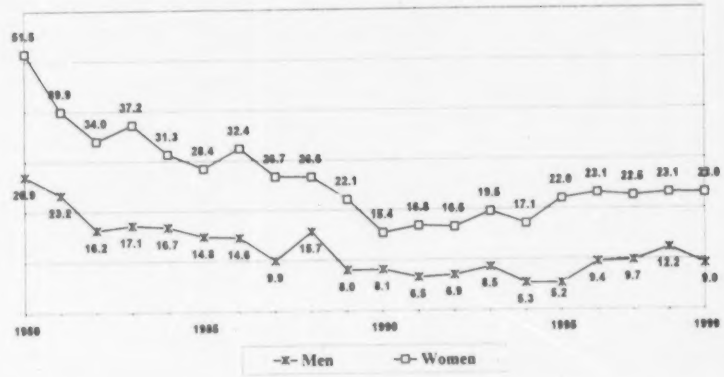


Figure 8.25: Alberta
Percent of Seniors in Poverty

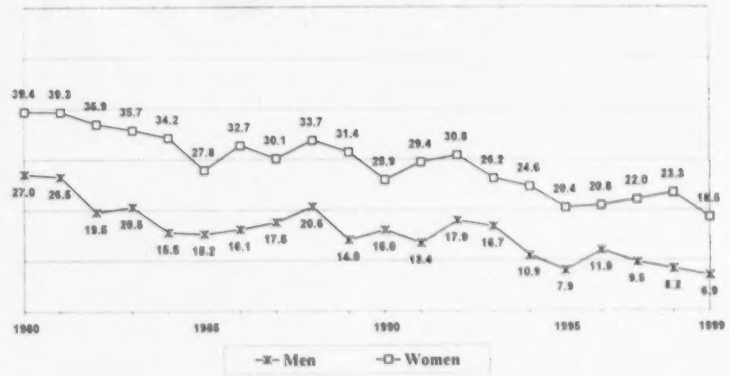
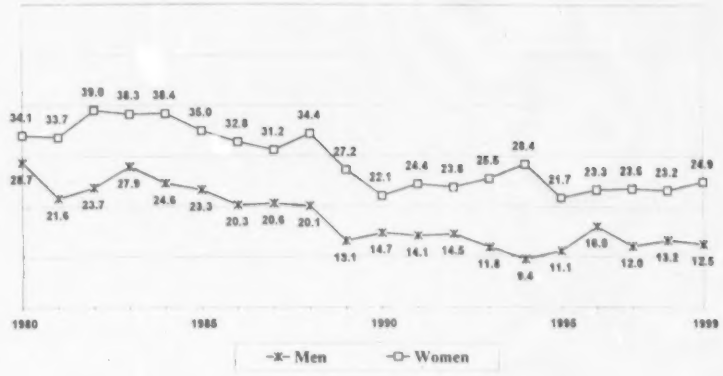


Figure 8.26: British Columbia
Percent of Seniors in Poverty



IX. ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The preceding chapters have provided a certain amount of data on some Aboriginal persons, those who live off-reserve, as they are included in the SLID data base that is used for Poverty Profile. They show the greater extent to which this population experiences poverty compared to the Canadian population as a whole. Understanding the reality of Aboriginal ways of life and poverty among Aboriginal peoples is a complex matter, however, and requires additional information.

This chapter fills in contextual information[1] to help improve public understanding of some of the issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada. It looks at several factors that may make Aboriginal individuals and families more vulnerable to poverty and explains some of the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples that influence how information is gathered, used and interpreted[2]. This, in turn, has implications for the way policies to improve economic and social well-being among Aboriginal peoples are designed and implemented.

Many regular and frequent surveys used to gather information on Canadians do not include the territories or on-reserve populations and they do not ask about ethnic or racial status. This kind of detailed information is available from the Census of Population but it is collected less frequently and takes longer to process.

Unless otherwise specified, the Aboriginal population described in this chapter is comprised of people who have self-identified in the 1996 Census of Population as Aboriginal, as well as those who did not identify themselves as an Aboriginal person but who are Registered Indian and/or First Nation (Band) members. Those who identified themselves as Aboriginal could specify whether they were North American Indian, Metis, Inuit or had Multiple Aboriginal identity.

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The situation of Aboriginal peoples today has its roots in the history of European arrival in Canada and agreements that were, in theory, to allow peaceful settlement by non-native people while allowing native people to retain large tracts of land on which they could protect the Aboriginal way of life. There was, and continues to be, considerable diversity among Aboriginal peoples. In general, however, Aboriginal traditional approaches to individual and collective rights, to governance, to the relationship between people and the land, to each other

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this chapter are from the 1996 Census of Population and other Statistics Canada sources, including *Women in Canada 2000: a Gender-Based Statistical Report*.

[2] The National Council of Welfare is grateful to Dr. David Newhouse of Trent University for his assistance and insights in reviewing a draft of this chapter. Responsibility for the final content and any errors in presentation of the data, however, rests with the Council.

and to other generations are different than the approaches that have developed as the norm for most non-Aboriginal Canadians[3].

In the ensuing legacy of colonialism, and controversies that continue to the present day, Canada's constitution of 1867 assigned the responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians to the federal government.[4] In 1876, the first Indian Act was created, based on the notion of wardship, where Indians were treated as minors who needed protection and education. The Act created a special status of person called an Indian and a Registry maintained by the federal government to keep track of them. It also established Indian reserves with a limited form of governance under federal stewardship and a regulatory regime that kept Indians out of the mainstream of many aspects of Canadian life. For example, Indians on-reserve are excluded from paying income tax, but until recently they were also excluded from Canada's major economic development and income security programs. Historically they were denied the ability to shape the policies that affected them. Even the most basic engagement in the political decisions of the country, the ability to vote, was granted only in 1960.

Aboriginal people who are not registered under the Act and/or who live off-reserve live under the same federal-provincial/territorial regimes as other Canadians. But these are regimes where policies and programs were not necessarily designed taking their particular needs and circumstances into account, including their experience of overt and systemic discrimination based on racial and ethnic origins.

The different categories of Aboriginal peoples have different relationships to the governing structures of Canada. These categories affect the ways in which individuals are identified and counted, especially for those who are registered under the Indian Act and described as Status Indians, or Registered Indians. In the past, women and men in this category were treated very differently. Status Indian women who married men outside this category lost their status and their First Nation (Band) membership. This meant they lost the ability to live in the communities in which they were raised and belonged, as well as any rights to land or services on-reserve for themselves or their children, even upon divorce. The opposite was true for Status Indian men whose non-status wives became Status Indians. In 1985 this was changed allowing many women and children to reclaim their status and, in some cases, band membership.

Metis on the other hand, are a population of mixed ancestry that grew from early intermarriage of Aboriginal and European people and over time developed a distinct cultural identity. Despite the key role of the Metis in the economic development of Canada, they have gained some degree of recognition and rights only recently, in the *Constitution Act* of 1982. Inuit have a particular identity that is closely intertwined with geography, having lived in the northernmost parts of Canada for thousands of years and having much in common with Inuit

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[3] For more extensive information on the history and perspectives of different Aboriginal peoples see, for example, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Volumes 1 to 5, Canada, Minister of Supply and Services (1996).

[4] Section 91(24) of the British North America Act, 1867.

living in other circumpolar countries. Their mixed economy combines wage earning in balance with food and fur production and other land-based activities. In most northern areas they are majority of the population in contrast with the situation Aboriginal peoples in more southern parts of Canada. They have achieved much in the way of political institutions appropriate to their culture, especially with the creation of the new Nunavut territory in 1999, but the North itself has economic challenges and limited influence or power in the larger Canadian context.

The *Indian Act* is one of many factors that could influence how an Aboriginal individual might answer a Census question about identity and in fact from one count to another people do change the way they identify themselves. The intermingling of culture, constitution and legislation are factors that affect Aboriginal identities and cause them to change over time as individual circumstances change.

With regard to language, a little over 29 percent of the Aboriginal population of Canada was able to speak an Aboriginal language in 1996. The percentage is highest for Inuit at almost 73 percent compared to about 35 percent for North American Indians and just under 9 percent for Metis. Fewer Aboriginal persons, however, regularly spoke an Aboriginal language at home. Age makes a difference, with older people more likely to speak an Aboriginal language.

THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION, ON- AND OFF-RESERVE

The Aboriginal population in 1996 totalled 799,010, or about 3 percent of the Canadian population. Although the majority of Aboriginal persons do not live on-reserve, a significant proportion do. Aboriginal women were somewhat more likely to live off-reserve than men (72 percent compared to 69 percent) and men were more likely to live on-reserve (31 percent compared to 28 percent). The on-reserve population was almost all North American Indian and almost all Aboriginal persons (98 percent) who lived in reserve communities were registered under the *Indian Act*. It is important to note that an estimated 44,000 people lived in incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and settlements and thus were not counted in the above percentages.

Urban and rural living patterns for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons showed differences and similarities. Of all Aboriginal women 51.3 percent lived in off-reserve urban areas compared to 79.3 percent of non-Aboriginal women. Among Aboriginal men 47.5 percent lived in urban areas compared to 77.6 percent for non-Aboriginal men. The percentage of people living in non-reserve rural areas was similar for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and men ranging at around 21 to 22 percent. Metis people were the most urbanized, Inuit the least and most Inuit lived in the north, particularly in the new territory of Nunavut, where the majority of the population is Aboriginal.

Aboriginal women (56.7 percent) were more likely than Aboriginal men (52.9 percent) and non-Aboriginal women and men (42.7 percent and 42.8 percent) to have moved in the five years before the 1996 Census.

FAMILY COMPOSITION

There are significant differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations that relate to family formation and fertility. The Aboriginal population, on average, is much younger. In 1996, there were fewer seniors and more children under 15. One reason is that fertility rates are much higher among Aboriginal women than other Canadian women. The 1996 Census data show Registered Indian women, for example, had a total fertility rate of 2.7 children compared to 1.6 for all Canadian women. And the next cohort of new Aboriginal parents was larger, with 18 percent of the female Aboriginal population in the 15-24 age group compared to 13 percent of non-Aboriginal women.

Again, however, it is important to put this in historical perspective, and not jump to any conclusions that Aboriginal families and individuals might be better off if their fertility patterns were closer to the Canadian average. For example, European diseases decimated much of the early Aboriginal population base and government policies in later years separated children from their parents and broke down family and community ties. The ability to have and raise children, therefore, has a different meaning than it does for most non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Because there is usually a large gender dimension to poverty, the family status of women can be a key factor in well-being. There are some important differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. For example in 1996, 32 percent of Aboriginal women were in a husband-wife family compared to 50 percent of non-Aboriginal women. Aboriginal women were over twice as likely to live in a common-law relationship (17 percent compared to 8 percent) and to be lone-parents (18 percent compared to 8 percent). Lone-parent families headed by Aboriginal women tended to be larger, as well, with an average of 2.3 children compared to 1.8 for other female-headed lone-parent families. Aboriginal women were less likely to live alone and more likely to live with members of their extended families than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

HEALTH

Health is an important factor that can affect the income of individuals and their families and can be both a cause and consequence of poverty. There are a number of illnesses that affect Aboriginal peoples to a much greater extent than those in the non-Aboriginal population, including diabetes, heart problems, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Substantial proportions of Aboriginal persons, especially Aboriginal women, report that their health is only fair or poor. Life expectancy for Aboriginal people is below that for non-Aboriginal people, although the gap has narrowed a great deal in the last 20 years. In both populations, women tend to outlive men.

Suicide rates are also very much higher for Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal populations, especially for young Aboriginal men. For example, from 1989 to 1993, the suicide rate per 100,000 population in the 15-24 year age group was 126 for Registered Indian men compared

to 35 for Registered Indian women, while the corresponding Canadian averages were 24 for men and 5 for women.[5]

JUSTICE

Another area where there are large differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is in their interaction with the criminal justice system. Aboriginal people are often the victims of racially-based violence, compounded for women by high rates of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. Aboriginal people are also far more likely to be incarcerated than other Canadians and there is evidence that racism and poverty-related factors play a large role in this phenomenon.[6]

EDUCATION

There is a clear relationship between education and employment that impacts on vulnerability to poverty. For example, the unemployment rate for young Aboriginal adults without high school was 40 percent in 1996, compared to 9 percent for those with a university degree. In the past decade Aboriginal people have made some notable gains in education. For example, the percentage of Registered Indians with some post-secondary education rose by 5.5 percentage points between 1991 and 1996 compared to an increase of 3.8 percentage points for the total Canadian population[7]. However, Aboriginal people are still well below their non-Aboriginal counterparts in educational attainment.

Between 1986 and 1996, young Aboriginal adults aged 20 to 29 improved their qualifications at every level. The proportion of young women and men (including those still in school) with less than high school dropped while the share that completed college increased from 15 percent to 20 percent and the share that completed university doubled from 2 to 4 percent. There is still a ways to go to reach the levels of the non-Aboriginal population, however. For those 20-29 who are no longer attending school, fully 51 percent of young Aboriginal adults had less than secondary education compared to 23 percent for other Canadians. About 18 percent of young Aboriginal adults had completed college (29 percent for non-Aboriginal youth) and 3 percent had completed university (15 percent for non-Aboriginal youth).

According to the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey question asking why young adults did not complete their post-secondary studies, the primary reasons cited were family issues for

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[5] Health Canada, Health Programs Analysis, First Nations and Inuit Health Programs.

[6] See *Justice and the Poor*, National Council of Welfare (Spring 2000) for a detailed discussion of the ways in which social status and race make a difference in the way suspects are dealt with all th.. way through the criminal justice system process.

[7] *Comparison of Social Conditions, 1991 and 1996: Registered Indians, Registered Indians Living On Reserve and the Total Population of Canada*, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, PWGSC (Ottawa, 2000).

women (25 percent) and money issues for men (18 percent). On the positive side, Aboriginal people were more likely than other Canadians to return to school at older ages.[8] This was particularly true for women. In the 25-34 year age range, for example, 20.5 percent of Aboriginal women were attending school in 1996 compared to 13.5 percent of their male counterparts, and 16.9 percent and 15.2 percent of non-Aboriginal women and men respectively.[9] Lone-parent mothers also attended school more frequently than one might expect from their challenging family circumstances. Some 30 percent of Aboriginal lone mothers and 20 percent of mothers in two-parent families were attending school in 1996 and most of the these young mothers had an incomplete post-secondary education.

With regard to how post-secondary education is financed, there are differences among Aboriginal students. Registered Indian and Inuit students are eligible for federal grants from a post-secondary student support program. Support for Status Indian students comes from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and it is now administered by First Nations but the adequacy of benefits has been questioned. Many of these students are using the provincial loan programs designed with a middle-class assumption that parents are able to contribute to their children's education, and are graduating with high debt loads. Other Aboriginal students would access the same federal and provincial student loan programs as non-Aboriginal students, and they too face the heavy burden of debt that accompanies graduation for many low-income students.

A variety of historical, economic, social and geographical factors affect education for Aboriginal people. For example, for people living in rural, remote and Northern communities, access to educational institutions is a difficulty, especially at higher levels. Students must travel great distances and deal with unfamiliar social and cultural environments that can be alienating and discouraging. The negative intergenerational effects of earlier residential school experiences are felt very strongly by many Aboriginal people. The family separation, loss of cultural ties and abuse that Aboriginal children and their families faced in the name of education continue to present a serious barrier to the pursuit of formal education. Increasing education over the 1986 to 96 decade, however, is likely to have positive intergenerational effects as this better educated group of adults also means there are more role models for Aboriginal children and youth.

WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Aboriginal people have tended to be less likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to be part of the paid workforce. When looking at employment, unemployment and income, however, it is important to recognize that for some Aboriginal people, especially those living on-reserve and in the North, there may be a great deal of work done that is unpaid. Their complex realities can often include large amounts of time spent fishing, trapping, hunting,

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[8] Tate, Heather, "Educational Achievement of Young Aboriginal Adults", *Canadian Social Trends*, Statistics Canada (Spring 1999, No.52).

[9] *Women in Canada 2000* (p. 256).

sewing and caring for children and other family and friends. Another dimension that affects earnings and income comparisons is that Aboriginal people on-reserve do not pay income tax but they also have not had the same opportunities to build up public pension credits.

In 1996, for people aged 15 and older, 41 percent of Aboriginal women and 48 percent of Aboriginal men were employed, compared to 53.1 percent of non-Aboriginal women and 65.6 percent of non-Aboriginal men. The highest employment rates were for the population aged 25-44, where the figures for Aboriginal women and men were 50.7 percent and 59.8 percent respectively and 71.8 percent and 83.5 percent for non-Aboriginal women and men. In the category of seniors aged 65 and over, Aboriginal women had a higher employment rate than their non-Aboriginal counterparts at 5.4 percent compared to 4.3 percent. The rates for senior men were quite close compared to men in other age groups.

Unemployment rates for Aboriginal people, at 21.1 percent for women and 26.5 percent for men, were very high compared to non-Aboriginal rates of 9.7 percent for women and 9.9 percent for men.

For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike, the major share of their personal income is from wages and salaries. For Aboriginal women and men, wages and salaries represented 61.6 percent and 71.4 percent of their income respectively in 1995, similar to non-Aboriginal figures of 66.6 percent and 71.8 percent. Government transfer payments were the second major source of income for both Aboriginal and other Canadians, but they represented a higher share for Aboriginal persons. Other Canadians had comparatively more self-employment, investment and other sources of income. Average total income for that year for Aboriginal people was $13,305 for women and $18,221 for men. For non-Aboriginal people it was $19,348 for women and $31,404 for men.

As mentioned above, family status is an important variable affecting socio-economic status. Among all Aboriginal identity groups, average incomes of female lone-parent families were about one-half to one-third those of husband-wife families. These female-headed families had an average annual income of less than $16,000 compared to an average of about $22,000 among other Canadian families headed by lone mothers. The amounts were higher but the gap was wider for lone fathers, with Aboriginal lone-father families averaging $21,000 in income and their counterparts among other Canadians averaging about $35,000.[10]

In addition to wage and income gaps between Aboriginal people and other Canadians there is also evidence from a study of 1991 data[11] of even wider gaps among and within Aboriginal peoples. Overall, Metis had significantly better wages than North American Indians on-reserve for comparable work. And there was greater inequality and polarization of wage distribution among the Inuit than for other Aboriginal peoples.

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[10] Hull, Jeremy, *Aboriginal Single Mothers in Canada, 1996: A Statistical Profile*, Research and Analysis Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa (2001, p. 88).

[11] Bernier, Rachel, *The Dimensions of Wage Inequality among Aboriginal Peoples*, No. 109, Analytical Studies Branch – Research Paper Series, Statistics Canada (December, 1997).

POVERTY

As education, employment and income figures would suggest, the incidence of poverty among Aboriginal people is very high. Using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (which exclude people living on-reserve or in the territories), the poverty rate in 1995 for Aboriginal people 15 and over was 42.7 percent for women and 35.1 percent for men, over double the rates for other Canadian women and men. The comparable poverty rate for Aboriginal children under age 15 was 59 percent compared to 25 percent for other children.

The poverty rates for Aboriginal people would be even higher if reserve populations were included in the calculations. In 1996, the majority of Registered Indians lived in about 900 small First Nations communities. According to a Statistics Canada study that mapped the conditions of these communities, nearly all had a lower standard of well-being compared to the average Canadian community. Among Aboriginal communities, there were socio-economic differences as measured by schooling, employment, income and housing, including significant differences even among First Nations communities very close to each other geographically. About 23 percent of the Registered Indian population lived in above average First Nations communities, 47 percent in average ones and 32 percent in below average ones. Those communities considered below average had high levels of crowding and low levels of schooling, employment, and income. Location near urban centres or resource rich areas seemed to improve well-being but not in all cases. There were complex social, economic, cultural and geographical patterns that affected the status of the various Aboriginal communities.[12]

Female-headed lone parent families are at high risk of poverty in Canada as a whole and a study commissioned by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada indicates this is particularly true of the Aboriginal population as well. For example, in 1995, 49 percent of non-Aboriginal Canadian lone mothers identified government transfer payments (e.g., employment insurance, social assistance and child benefits) as their major source of income. The comparable figures for Aboriginal lone mothers were 72 percent for Registered Indians, 71 percent for Non-status Indians, 64 percent for Metis and 59 percent for Inuit. Dependency on transfer payments was more pronounced for Aboriginal lone mothers who lived in off-reserve urban locations.[13]

Depth of poverty is a critical issue for Aboriginal people. One indicator of depth of poverty is the proportion of the population that receives social assistance. As the National Council of Welfare's regular *Welfare Incomes* reports show, social assistance rates across the country can fall thousands of dollars short of the LICOs. And there are high rates of dependency on social assistance among Aboriginal people, especially on-reserve.

The most recent data from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, indicate that nationally beneficiaries of social assistance comprised 35.8 percent of the on-reserve population in

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[12] Armstrong, Robin, "Mapping the Conditions of First Nations Communities", *Canadian Social Trends*, Statistics Canada (Winter 1999, No.55).

[13] *Aboriginal Single Mothers* (p.87).

2000-01. This rate reflects a steady decline since 1994-95 when it was about 43 percent. The average number of monthly social assistance beneficiaries (adults and their dependants and singles), however, increased throughout the 1990s, peaking in 1997-98.[14] Despite improvement overall in the national situation, there is considerable variation of rates and patterns across the country.

Recent social assistance information for other Aboriginal families and individuals is not available. A 1995 study found that 28.6 percent of respondents to the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey reported receiving social assistance, over three times the rate of the population in general. The rates went from a high of over 40 percent for reserve populations to rates in the low 20 percent range for off-reserve Indians, Metis and Inuit.[15]

The information provided in this chapter shows that Aboriginal peoples generally occupy the lowest rungs of economic and social indicators in Canada. There is some evidence that this situation is starting to change but poverty and all of its manifestations remain the most common life experience of Aboriginal peoples. Making further progress requires examining and dealing with the historical actions and events that have led to this situation and the contemporary governance aspirations of Aboriginal peoples that are at the centre of future development.

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[14] *Basic Departmental Data 2000*, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa (2001).

[15] Figures taken from "Aboriginal Social Assistance Expenditures" by Moscovitch, Allan and Webster, Andrew, in *How Ottawa Spends 1995-96: Mid-Life Crises*; edited by Phillips, Susan D. (Carleton University Press, Inc., 1995). This article provides information on the history and implications of the design, financing and administration of social assistance provision to Aboriginal peoples and how the system for Registered Indians developed differently than the emerging welfare state system that applied to other Canadians.

CONCLUSION

The National Council of Welfare is encouraged that, for most Canadian individuals and families, poverty rates continued the downward trend in 1998 through into 1999. But given eight consecutive years of economic growth and a very impressive growth rate of nearly 5 percent in 1999, it is clear that the wave of economic prosperity continued to fail the poor. We are convinced that Canadian governments could have done more to prevent many individuals and families from falling into poverty. And they must do much more for those who experience a long duration of poverty. It is truly alarming that between 1993 and 1998, pre-school children were the Canadians most likely to have lived in poverty for all six years.

We were dismayed to see a rise in the poverty rate for senior women when the rate for seniors generally was at an all-time low. We were also discouraged that, despite a small improvement, the 16 percent of Canadian families headed by single parents were still raising about 42 percent of Canada's poor children. This is an untenable situation in a prosperous country like ours. For Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the situation is also one of small improvements in the face of great and pressing need.

This report showed again that having a job, even a full-time one, is no guarantee against poverty. And the people who contribute in other meaningful ways to our society and economy, by improving their education as students or by providing care for children and other dependants, faced the penalty of high risk of poverty. Canadians whose contributions were affected by disabilities or poor health faced a similar risk. In 1999, 40 percent of people with long-term illness and more than half of single-parent mothers were poor.

Poverty Profile 1999 has provided new insights into who is most susceptible to extreme depth of poverty or poverty that persists for many years. It has also helped improve our understanding of the impact of taxes as well as transfers on poverty. The Council hopes that this information can be used to design more efficient and effective policies.

Governments in Canada have the tools to fight poverty. We have the commitments, starting with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And we value our good reputation, although compared to other countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, there are signs that complacency may be causing us to fall behind the progress of others. We also have experience, having all but wiped out poverty among seniors. As well we can benefit from others' experience, such as the European countries where poverty rates among single-parents and people with disabilities are far better than ours, even as low as single digits.

The National Council of Welfare also believes that Canadian governments have adequate resources at their disposal to fight poverty. That we can and must do so is far from an idle dream. The cost of poverty is one that all Canadians pay.

Poverty is a reflection of political choices. We can always steer a better course.

APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

From 1965 to 1995, Statistics Canada used a household survey known as the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) to obtain information on the distribution of income and the nature and extent of low-income in private households in Canada. In 1993, Statistics Canada introduced a new survey, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), with much the same objectives but using a different approach. While SCF took a snapshot of the lives of people at a particular point in time, SLID follows people for six years to see how their circumstances change over time. Starting with the 1996 reference year, SLID replaced SCF as the source of annual income estimates.

> Poverty statistics in *Poverty Profile 1999* differ slightly from previous years due to adjustments made in the sources of data as well as the addition of new information. This section describes these changes. The revisions have very little effect on rates or patterns of poverty, but they tend to add slightly to the number of people living in poverty.

Statistics Canada revised its low income data for the period 1980 through 1993 in the 1994 version of *Income Distributions by Size in Canada, 1992*. The revisions included shifting population estimates to the 1991 census base, adjusting the estimates to correct under coverage, and including non-permanent residents physically present in Canada. Previously, the National Council of Welfare included only some re-weighted data. For *Poverty Profile 1999*, the NCW has used Statistics Canada's revised data for all years.

Poverty Profile 1999 is based on data from both SLID and SCF. Yearly data for 1996 to 1999, are taken from SLID while data for earlier years from 1980 to 1995 are from SCF. The long-term data from 1993 to 1998 were derived from SLID. The 1999 SLID was conducted in January and May of 1999 and sampled roughly 30,000 private households from all parts of the country except for Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Indian reserves, and institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, and homes for the elderly. The survey looked at incomes for the 1999 calendar year. Close to three-quarters of SLID respondents gave their consent to the use of their TI tax information to provide income data.

The 1999 SLID results were published by Statistics Canada under the title *Income in Canada, 1999*. Statistics Canada also provided custom tabulations to the National Council of Welfare[1]. We are grateful for the assistance provided by officials of the agency, especially Philip Giles, Pina La Novara, Cathy Oikawa and Yvette Cabana of the Income Statistics

[1] "Readers may notice that some numbers in this publication differ from those published by Statistics Canada. This is due to certain changes made by Statistics Canada to their historical database. While the exact numbers may differ, none of these differences significantly affects the analysis and interpretation of the data contained in this report. Readers may also be interested in knowing that Statistics Canada is currently revising its historical survey weights for the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) and the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) to move from population estimates based on the 1991 Census to those based on the 1996 Census. With the release of the household income data for reference year 2000, all survey estimates will change."

Division. We also appreciate the technical assistance of consultant Olusola Womiloju. The analysis and interpretation of the data, however, is the responsibility of the National Council of Welfare.

Information about poverty is obtained by comparing the survey data with Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs. The LICOs represent levels of gross income where people spend disproportionate amounts of money for food, shelter and clothing. Statistics Canada has decided over the years - somewhat arbitrarily - that 20 percentage points is a reasonable measure of the additional burden. The average Canadian family spent 34.7 percent of gross income on food, shelter and clothing according to 1992 data on spending patterns, so it was assumed that low-income Canadians spent 54.7 percent or more on the necessities of life.

The low income cut-offs vary by the size of the family unit and the population of the area of residence. There are seven categories of family size, from one person to seven or more persons, and five community sizes ranging from rural areas to cities with 500,000 or more residents. The result is a set of 35 cut-offs. The cut-offs are updated annually by Statistics Canada using the Consumer Price Index.

The cut-offs used in this report are technically known as 1992 base LICOs, because of the year in which spending on food, shelter and clothing was surveyed. Previously, the NCW had used the earlier 1986 base. The pre-tax set of 35 cut-offs for 1999 and the National Council of Welfare's estimates of the cut-offs for 2000 and 2001 appear in Appendix B. The corresponding post-tax low income cut-offs for 1999 and the National Council of Welfare's estimates for 2000 and 2001 are listed in Appendix C.

The National Council of Welfare and many other social policy groups regard the LICOs as poverty lines and use the terms poor and low-income interchangeably. Statistics Canada takes pains to avoid references to poverty. It says the cut-offs have no official status, and it does not promote their use as poverty lines.

Regardless of the terminology, the cut-offs are a useful tool for defining and analyzing the significantly large portion of the Canadian population with low incomes. They are not the only measures of poverty used in Canada, but they are the most widely accepted and are roughly comparable to most alternative measures.

Figure A.1 shows eight alternative measures of poverty, two versions of the low-income cut-offs of Statistics Canada (1992 base) and six other lines sometimes seen in other published reports on poverty.[2] Depending on the levels of analysis chosen (municipal, provincial, national or international), these poverty lines may vary.

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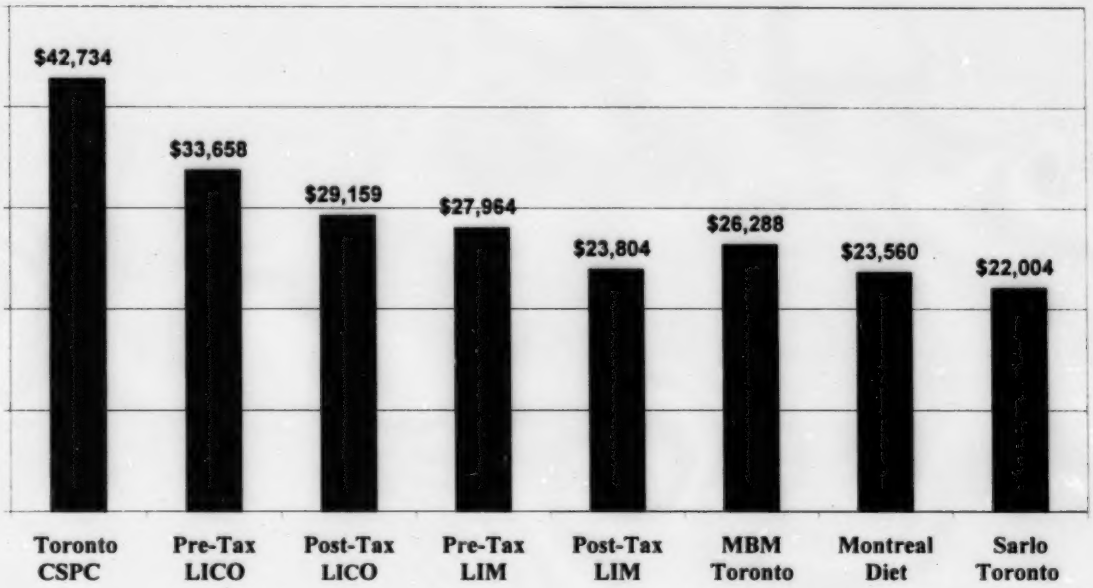
[2] Some of the information for Figure A.1 comes from Ross, David P.; Shillington, E. Richard and Lochhead, Clarence, *The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty – 1994* (Chapter 2), Canadian Council on Social Development and Sarlo, Christopher A., *Poverty in Canada 1996*, Fraser Institute.

Figure A.1: Poverty Lines for a Family of Four Living in a Large City, 1999



The first bar in Figure A.1, Toronto CSPC, refers to the budget guides of the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, formerly the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto. The original calculation was updated to 1999 by the National Council of Welfare using the Consumer Price Index and custom tabulations supplied by Statistics Canada.

The next two bars represent two different versions of the low income cut-offs of Statistics Canada. The pre-tax LICO is based on total income including government transfers, but before the deduction of federal, provincial or territorial income taxes. The post-tax LICO is based on after-tax income, that is, total income including government transfers less federal, provincial or territorial income taxes.

Pre-tax LIM and LIM post-tax refer to the low income measures of Statistics Canada, measures which are both based on one-half of median family income. LIMs vary with family size and composition, but they are the same in all parts of the country. They do not reflect the reality of higher costs of living in large cities and lower costs of living in rural areas. The LIMs are the only lines in Figure A.1 that do not vary from place to place in Canada.

One-half of median family income adjusted for family size is the approach most often used in international comparisons of poverty. LIMs and similar measures provide interesting

comparisons at a given point in time, but they tend to be "flat" over time and do not track well against the ups and downs of the economic cycle.

MBM Toronto stands for the market basket measures being developed by Human Resources Development Canada for the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The MBMs are based on the cost of buying a basket of goods and services in the local marketplace. The bar in Figure A.1 is for a family living in Toronto. The National Council of Welfare updated the figure to 1999, but the update does not reflect changes in methodology that were made after 1996.

At a theoretical level, MBMs are being designed to be sensitive to differences in costs of living, particularly rents in different parts of the country. They include the costs of eating a nutritious diet, buying clothing for work and social occasions, adequate shelter at median local cost, payment of personal costs such as personal care, household needs, furniture, telephone service, public transportation, reading, recreation, entertainment and school supplies. Unlike LICOs which are calculated nationally and are adjusted by family type and community size, MBMs are to be calculated provincially and are to be adjusted by family type and community size. For example, for families with children, it is envisaged that MBMs will include the child care costs incurred to enable family members to work for pay and child support payments made by non-custodial parents. MBMs will also adjust for income taxes and payroll taxes paid by members of the household, and actual out-of-pocket expenses for medically prescribed expenditures for dental and vision care, prescription drugs and prescribed aids for persons with disabilities.[3]

Montreal Diet refers to the income needed for a minimum adequate standard of living for a two-earner couple with a 15-year-old son and a ten-year-old daughter in Montreal as calculated by the Montreal Diet Dispensary and updated by the National Council of Welfare. The group also has basic needs guidelines strictly intended for short-term assistance that are somewhat lower.

Sarlo Toronto is the poverty line for Toronto calculated by Christopher A. Sarlo and updated to 1999 by the National Council of Welfare. Professor Sarlo also has "social comfort lines" that are twice as high as his poverty lines.

Poverty statistics are often broken down according to families and unattached individuals. The surveys that gathered the data used in this report defined a family as a group of individuals sharing a common dwelling unit and related by blood, marriage or adoption. The definition includes couples living in common-law relationships. Most of the data in this report are expressed in terms of families rather than the number of people in family units. Unattached individuals are defined as people living alone or in households where they are not related to other household members.

Researchers use poverty lines to differentiate unattached individuals and families living in poverty from the rest of a given population. A poor or low-income family has an income

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[3] Zeesman, Allen; Hatfield, Michael and Gascon, Stéphane, *The Market Basket Measure—Constructing a New Measure of Povert,* Human Resources Development Canada, Applied Research Bulletin (Volume 4, No 2).

below the poverty line, while a "non-poor" family has an income above the poverty line. The same applies for unattached individuals.

Poverty rates compare the number of poor persons, families or unattached individuals in a particular category to all the persons, families or unattached individuals in the same category. For example, the estimated total number of families with children under 18 headed by a female single parent under 65 was 570,000 in 1999. Out of all of these female-headed single-parent families, an estimated 295,000 were living in poverty. The poverty rate was 295,000 divided by 570,000 or 51.8 percent. Sometimes, the terms "incidence of poverty" or "risk of poverty" are used instead of the poverty rate. All three terms have the same meaning.

Income refers to money income reported by all family members 16 years or older. Income includes gross wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, investment income, government transfer payments (Employment Insurance, Old Age Security, Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, Guaranteed Income Supplements, Spouse's Allowance, Child Tax Benefit, other child credits or allowances, welfare from provincial and municipal programs, workers' compensation benefits, GST/HST credits, provincial and territorial tax credits and any other government transfers), pensions, and miscellaneous income (scholarships and child support payments, for example). Some sections of this report refer to earnings rather than income. Earnings means gross wages and salaries and net income from self-employment.

APPENDIX B: LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS (PRE-TAX)

STATISTICS CANADA'S PRE-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 1999					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$17,886	$15,341	$15,235	$14,176	$12,361
2	$22,357	$19,176	$19,044	$17,720	$15,450
3	$27,805	$23,849	$23,683	$22,037	$19,216
4	$33,658	$28,869	$28,669	$26,677	$23,260
5	$37,624	$32,272	$32,047	$29,820	$26,002
6	$41,590	$35,674	$35,425	$32,962	$28,743
7 or more	$45,556	$39,076	$38,803	$36,105	$31,485

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S PRE-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2000*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$18,371	$15,757	$15,648	$14,561	$12,696
2	$22,964	$19,697	$19,561	$18,201	$15,870
3	$28,560	$24,497	$24,326	$22,635	$19,738
4	$34,572	$29,653	$29,448	$27,401	$23,892
5	$38,646	$33,148	$32,917	$30,629	$26,708
6	$42,719	$36,642	$36,387	$33,857	$29,524
7 or more	$46,793	$40,137	$39,857	$37,085	$32,340

* Based on 2.7 percent inflation in 2000.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S PRE-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2001*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$18,849	$16,167	$16,055	$14,940	$13,026
2	$23,561	$20,209	$20,070	$18,674	$16,283
3	$29,303	$25,134	$24,958	$23,224	$20,251
4	$35,471	$30,424	$30,214	$28,113	$24,513
5	$39,651	$34,010	$33,773	$31,425	$27,402
6	$43,830	$37,595	$37,333	$34,737	$30,292
7 or more	$48,010	$41,181	$40,893	$38,049	$33,181

*Based on an estimate of 2.6 percent inflation in 2001.

APPENDIX C: LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS (POST-TAX)

STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 1999					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$14,771	$12,442	$12,250	$11,194	$9,684
2	$18,024	$15,182	$14,947	$13,659	$11,817
3	$22,796	$19,202	$18,905	$17,276	$14,946
4	$28,392	$23,916	$23,546	$21,517	$18,615
5	$31,733	$26,730	$26,317	$24,048	$20,806
6	$35,075	$29,544	$29,087	$26,580	$22,997
7 or more	$38,416	$32,359	$31,857	$29,111	$25,188

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2000*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$15,167	$12,778	$12,588	$11,496	$9,945
2	$18,511	$15,592	$15,351	$14,028	$12,136
3	$23,411	$19,720	$19,415	$17,742	$15,350
4	$29,159	$24,562	$24,182	$22,098	$19,118
5	$32,590	$27,452	$27,028	$24,697	$21,368
6	$36,022	$30,342	$29,872	$27,298	$23,618
7 or more	$39,453	$33,233	$32,717	$29,897	$25,868

*Based on an estimated inflation rate of 2.7 percent in 2000.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2001*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$15,569	$13,114	$12,911	$11,798	$10,207
2	$18,997	$16,002	$15,754	$14,397	$12,455
3	$24,027	$20,239	$19,926	$18,209	$15,753
4	$29,925	$25,208	$24,817	$22,679	$19,620
5	$33,447	$28,174	$27,738	$25,347	$21,930
6	$36,969	$31,139	$30,658	$28,015	$24,239
7 or more	$40,490	$34,106	$33,577	$30,683	$26,548

*Based on an estimated inflation rate of 2.6 percent in 2001.

APPENDIX C: LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS (POST-TAX)

STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 1999					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$14,771	$12,442	$12,250	$11,194	$9,684
2	$18,024	$15,182	$14,947	$13,659	$11,817
3	$22,796	$19,202	$18,905	$17,276	$14,946
4	$28,392	$23,916	$23,546	$21,517	$18,615
5	$31,733	$26,730	$26,317	$24,048	$20,806
6	$35,075	$29,544	$29,087	$26,580	$22,997
7 or more	$38,416	$32,359	$31,857	$29,111	$25,188

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2000*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$15,167	$12,778	$12,588	$11,496	$9,945
2	$18,511	$15,592	$15,351	$14,028	$12,136
3	$23,411	$19,720	$19,415	$17,742	$15,350
4	$29,159	$24,562	$24,182	$22,098	$19,118
5	$32,590	$27,452	$27,028	$24,697	$21,368
6	$36,022	$30,342	$29,872	$27,298	$23,618
7 or more	$39,453	$33,233	$32,717	$29,897	$25,868

*Based on an estimated inflation rate of 2.7 percent in 2000.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE'S ESTIMATES OF STATISTICS CANADA'S POST-TAX LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR 2001*					
Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	$15,569	$13,114	$12,911	$11,798	$10,207
2	$18,997	$16,002	$15,754	$14,397	$12,455
3	$24,027	$20,239	$19,926	$18,209	$15,753
4	$29,925	$25,208	$24,817	$22,679	$19,620
5	$33,447	$28,174	$27,738	$25,347	$21,930
6	$36,969	$31,139	$30,658	$28,015	$24,239
7 or more	$40,490	$34,106	$33,577	$30,683	$26,548

*Based on an estimated inflation rate of 2.6 percent in 2001.

APPENDIX D: POVERTY RATES BY REGION

POVERTY RATES BY REGION, COUPLES UNDER 65, 1999								
PROVINCE	Couples with Children				Couples without Children			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Atlantic	25,000	10.5%	18,000	7.3%	16,000	10.0%	11,000	10.0%
Quebec	91,000	12.8%	64,000	9.0%	53,000	11.2%	38,000	8.0%
Ontario	112,000	9.3%	72,000	6.0%	43,000	6.4%	32,000	4.6%
West	94,000	10.2%	70,000	7.6%	53,000	8.9%	37,000	8.9%
Canada	321,000	10.5%	22,400	7.3%	165,000	8.6%	117,000	6.1%

POVERTY RATES BY REGION, UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS UNDER 65, 1999								
PROVINCE	Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
Atlantic	42,000	49.7%	35,000	42.4%	46,000	39.3%	40,000	33.9%
Quebec	174,000	46.2%	166,000	44.1%	174,000	34.4%	162,000	32.2%
Ontario	164,000	36.5%	143,000	31.8%	189,000	32.7%	162,000	28.0%
West	168,000	43.7%	145,000	37.7%	192,000	31.6%	170,000	28.0%
Canada	548,000	42.3%	490,000	37.8%	600,000	33.2%	534,000	29.6%

APPENDIX E: DEPTH OF POVERTY STATISTICS BY REGION, 1999

DEPTH OF POVERTY IN DOLLARS BELOW POVERTY LINE AND PERCENTAGE OF POVERTY LINE , BY REGION, 1999

FAMILY TYPE	Atlantic				Quebec				Ontario				West			
	Dollar Gap ($)		% of Line		Dollar Gap		% of Line		Dollar Gap ($)		% of Line		Dollar Gap		% of Line	
	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre Tax	Post-Tax	Pre-Tax	Post-Tax	Pre Tax	Post-Tax
Unattached Women Under 65	6,806	4,907	53.9%	58.7%	8,710	6,035	47.9%	56.1%	7,797	5,733	52.7%	57.7%	7,574	5,529	54.6%	59.7%
Unattached Men Under 65	7,316	5,369	50.1%	54.6%	7,635	4,874	54.8%	65.0%	7,351	5,312	55.4%	60.7%	8,076	5,906	51.0%	56.2%
Single-Parent Mothers	7,051	3,958	68.3%	78.6%	8,766	5,556	64.5%	72.9%	8,900	5,626	65.1%	73.2%	8,139	5,359	66.8%	73.9%
Single-Parent Fathers	6,966	5,277	62.5%	62.3%	7,993	6,129	64.9%	67.5%	8,465	6,273	64.9%	67.6%	10,553	6,750	58.3%	69.4%
Couples Under 65 without Children	6,167	4,095	65.4%	70.4%	7,366	4,876	64.9%	71.0%	7,343	4,675	62.8%	69.7%	8,207	6,608	59.7%	59.5%
Couples Under 65 with Children	7,285	4,318	72.7%	80.2%	8,783	6,062	72.6%	77.3%	8,520	6,446	72.8%	74.8%	9,185	5,432	71.1%	79.4%
Unattached Women 65 and Over	2,042	582	86.0%	95.1%	3,587	1,874	78.9%	86.9%	3,268	1,394	81.0%	90.7%	2,693	1,493	83.8%	89.6%
Unattached Men 65 and Over	2,000	2,416	85.7%	77.0%	3,449	2,355	79.4%	83.2%	3,196	1,256	81.5%	91.2%	3,559	2,288	79.1%	84.1%
Couples 65 and Over	3,104	1,169	83.1%	93.1%	4,127	5,051	81.1%	71.9%	2,579	4,976	88.2%	72.4%	2,546	3,034	88.0%	81.9%

APPENDIX D: POVERTY RATES BY REGION

POVERTY RATES BY REGION, COUPLES UNDER 65, 1999								
PROVINCE	Couples with Children				Couples without Children			
	Pre-Tax		Post-Tax		Pre Tax		Post-Tax	
	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)	Number	Poverty Rate (%)
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PROVINCE	Unattached Women				Unattached Men			
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FAMILY TYPE	Atlantic				Quebec				Ontario				West			
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE

Mr. John Murphy (Chairperson)
Canning, Nova Scotia

Ms. Doris Bernard	Radisson, Quebec
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Mr. David Northcott	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Ms. Marilyn Peers	Halifax, Nova Scotia
Ms. Shaunna Reid	Mount Pearl, Newfoundland
Mr. David Welch	Ottawa, Ontario

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Interim Director (September 2001 to October 2002): Sheila Regehr

Director: Joanne Roulston

Senior Researcher: Olufunmilola (Lola) Fabowalé

Researcher: Diane Richard

Administration and Information Officer: Louise Gunville

Administrative Assistant: Claudette Mann

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE

The National Council of Welfare was established by the Government Organization Act, 1969, as a citizens' advisory body to the federal government. It advises the Minister of Human Resources Development on matters of concern to low-income Canadians.

The Council consists of members drawn from across Canada and appointed by the Governor-in-Council. All are private citizens and serve in their personal capacities rather than as representatives of organizations or agencies. The membership of the Council has included welfare recipients, public housing tenants and other low-income people, as well as educators, social workers and people involved in voluntary or charitable organizations.

Reports by the National Council of Welfare deal with a wide range of issues on poverty and social policy in Canada, including income security programs, welfare reform, medicare, poverty lines and poverty statistics, the retirement income system, taxation, labour market issues, social services and legal aid.

On peut se procurer des exemplaires en français de toutes les publications du Conseil national du bien-être social, en s'adressant au Conseil national du bien-être social, 9^{e} étage, 112, rue Kent, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0J9, sous notre site web au www.ncwcnbes.net ou sous forme de courrier électronique au ncw@magi.com.